TAKE ONE

the film magazine

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COSTA-GAVRAS TALKS ABOUT Z

(Also Tati, Nuclear Films, and the making of Medium Cool.)

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Peter Lebensold * ASSOCIATE EDITOR-PUBLISHER: Joe Medjuck * CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Ronald Blumer, Clive Denton, David Dorfman, Gordon Hitchens, John Hofsess, Bruce Martin * BOOK EDITOR: Glen Hunter * ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER: Phyllis Platt * CORRESPONDENTS: *Budapest* Elizabeth Szasz; *Chicago* Don B. Klugman; *Lisbon* Vasco Granja; *London* Suzanne Budgen, Jon Demme, Mark Forstater, Harold Crooks; *Los Angeles* Tony Reif, John H. Dorr; *Montreal* Gabriel Breton, Marc Gervais; *New York* Jay Cocks, Bob Cowan, Susan Rice; *Paris* Geoffrey Minish; *San Francisco* John Bigby; *Stockholm* Lars-Olaf Lothwall, Bob Nichols; *Toronto* Allan Collins; *Vancouver* Kirk Tougas; *Wales* Bill Sherman * BUSINESS MANAGER: Tom Lewis * CIRCULATION MANAGER: Anne Walker * TYPESETTER: Ancient & Modern Book Printers

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DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA

As the Producers of new features often contact this office first in order to put on Production or Location Managers and Assistant Directors we would ask experienced newcomers to Canada to contact us. We are also interested in hearing from experienced Production Accountants, Secretaries, etc. whose names can be passed on to Production Managers, Producers and interested parties seeking freelance assistance.

We would also like to remind Take One readers that the Directors Guild of Canada Directory 1970-71 listing nearly 150 Directors, Production Managers, Assistant Directors, and Production Assistants is now available from the Guild office free of charge.

65 Front St. East
Toronto 1, Ontario

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CREDITS

Peter Brigg is finishing a Ph.D. in Drama at the University of Toronto. He has made a short film, *Things*, and is on the Film Program Committee of the St. Lawrence Centre.

Bob Cowan is a prominent New York independent filmmaker.

Kenneth Dancyger will be teaching film at Boston University starting this fall.

John Hofsess is currently working on promotion for a just-begun Canadian feature, *Foxy Lady*, and assembling a book on the seizure and condemning (as obscene) of his own film, *The Columbus of Sex*.

Joe Kane is a free-lance writer, formerly of Long Island's Queens College. One of his short stories was recently published in an anthology by Doubleday.

Dennis Kawicki is a Michigan writer-film collector. His column originally appears in *Cinéaste* magazine (144 Bleecker St., N.Y.C. 10012).

Geoffrey Minish is a Canadian free-lance writer currently working out of Paris.

Steven North is currently producing (along with Terry Dene) *Bury Me in My Boots*, scripted and directed by Mai Zetterling, which will start shooting this fall. He is also due to direct *Let Me Down Easy*.

Sandra Paczkowski is an American photographer-designer recently arrived in Montreal.

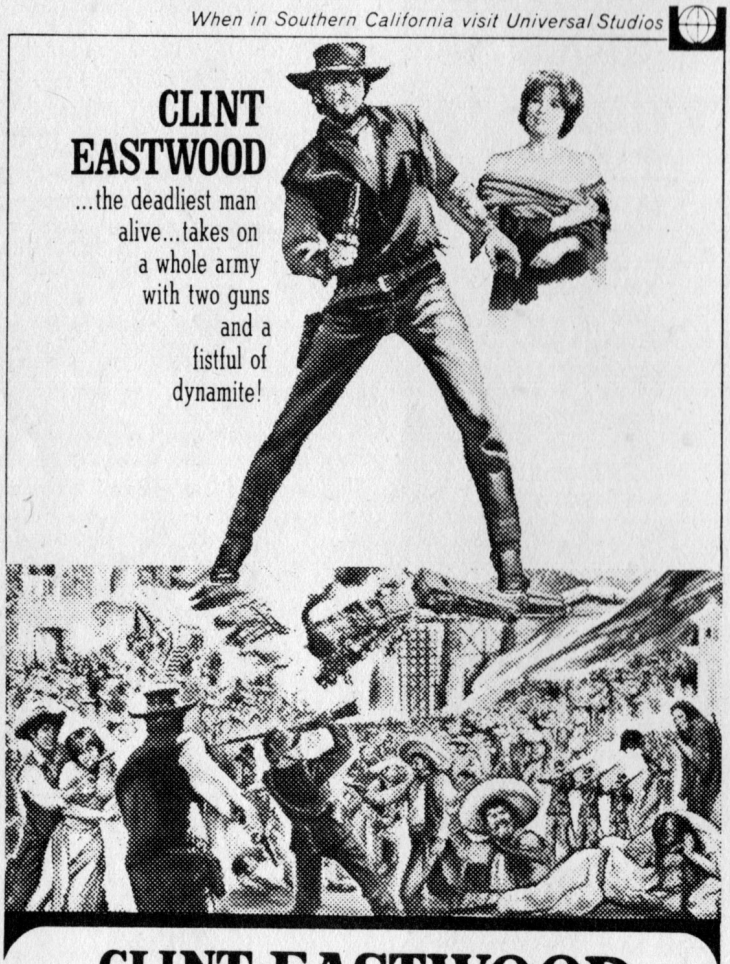
Al Sens has made several short animated films, plus free-lance animation work for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board, as well as numerous tv commercials. He is presently teaching at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia.

Kirk Tougas is a Vancouver filmmaker-critic.

Herman Weinberg, the respected author and teacher, will be having his latest book, *Saint Cinema*, a collection of various of his film writings, appear this fall.

Harold Woodside, an ex-Torontonian now living in London, has been script-writer, filmmaker, make-up man and underground poet. He is currently editing *Icon* magazine.

When in Southern California visit Universal Studios



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FEED-BACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

◆

For reasons which are probably obvious, Polanski (see *Take One*, Vol. 2, No. 5) won't be making *Day of the Dolphins* as he was scheduled to do this Spring. The film will instead be produced and directed by Franklin Schaffner. Polanski's script was fully completed, but I've no idea whether Schaffner will use it.

John McCarty
East Greenbush, N.Y.

◆

I have just got the current issue of *Take One*, and I especially enjoyed the article by John McCarty on Roman Polanski and his movies.

Like McCarty, I am a great Polanski fan, and I have admired each one of his films very much. He compared Polanski with Alfred Hitchcock, and I personally consider Polanski a much better director than Hitchcock, because he has a much nicer feel for the contemporary grotesque.

But McCarty called *Repulsion* "Polanski's masterpiece to date". And it is there where I disagree with him.

Let me say that I found *Repulsion* a fascinating movie, and I can't help but admire his skill in constructing the story. But I think that *Rosemary's Baby* was a much better movie. I consider *Rosemary's Baby* the best movie of 1968, and the finest thing in suspense and horror since Hitchcock's *Psycho* in '60. Although it somewhat lacked the subtle characteristics of the book, I think the film version of *Rosemary's Baby* was truly remarkable. Everyone in the cast fit their roles perfectly, and I'm sure if any other director had done the film, it would have been turned into just another silly horror movie.

Brian Perry,
Scarborough, Ont.

◆

Very interesting.

That was not, I confess, my original reaction to *Take One*, but after seeing three issues I'm becoming more and more convinced.

One word, I don't mean to be presumptuous, but my forté as an editor of the *Diamondback* is my ability at layout. The one really disconcerting thing about *Take One* is the lack of cut-lines under pictures. I know that in many underground weeklies the trend is away from explanation of any sort, but *Take One* does not strike me as underground. A picture of two people, when placed on a page which contains two or even three articles, tells a reader very little.

Bob Mondello
Entertainment editor
The Diamondback
University of Maryland
College Park, Md.

◆

We are interested in your publication of the records of the hearings by the House Com-

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mittee on Un-American Activities in which motion picture industry figures were involved, and would appreciate your advice on how many installments will be included in the series.

We plan to make some comment on your publication of this material, with proper credit to *Take One* since we find it particularly pertinent today in the light of implications of censorship of the press by the present Administration.

Mo Wax
Publisher
Film Bulletin
Philadelphia

◆

The school paper had a review of your magazine, and it sounded to me like you might be just what I've been looking for. *Film Quarterly* is a windy bore tied to European films, *Show* looks like it'll be plastic, I can't read French so *Cahiers du Cinema* is out, and the one or two others I've seen were so far out that Jonathan Mekas was the only person in them I'd ever heard of. And I'm not sure who *he* is. . . .

Jeremy A. Kaufman
Columbus, Ohio

NEWS

Henri Langlois, founder and director of the Cinémathèque Française, will again teach at Sir George Williams University (Montreal) this September. The 1970-71 course, which will be open both to the general public and to students working towards a degree, will cover "Nouvelle vague et cinéma d'aujourd'hui".

○

The American Film Institute and Kent School (Kent, Connecticut) will offer a two week Film Institute this summer (August 12-26) expressly designed for educators on all grade levels who are beginning their work in film study. Cost is $250. For more information, write; Kent/AFI Summer Film Institute, The American Film Institute, 1815 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

○

The University Film Association will be holding its 24th Annual Conference (August 16-22) at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Topics to be covered include production techniques, film instruction, research, distribution, copyrights, financing and computer animation. A two-week Animation Workshop will follow (August 24-September 4). For more information, write: University Film Association Conference, c/o Department of Photography and Cinema, Ohio State University, 156 West 19th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

○

Current Film Periodicals in English is an annotated bibliography listing well over a hundred magazines and newspapers devoted to every conceivable aspect of film. It provides complete subscription information and other pertinent facts of publication, a concise but adequate description of each periodical's content and orientation, plus writers-mart directives. The listing has been revised as of January 1970, and may be obtained for $1.25 from Adam Reilly, Room 4200, 405 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

○

Famous Players Canadian Corporation, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1970, has approved an annual grant of $10,000 for six awards to the university and highschool students producing the year's best 16mm and 8mm films in English and French.

The country's largest theatre circuit will award the top university filmmakers first and second prizes worth $2,500 and $1,750 for both English and French productions in 16mm, while first prizes of $750 will be provided at high-school level for English and French students using either 16 or 8mm.

Detailed plans for the annual awards will be announced shortly, but they will be organized on a regional basis with the four top films from each province, representing the two official languages, being eligible for final adjudication in Toronto and Montreal.

First awards will be made before the end of 1970 and provisions will be made to show the winning 16mm versions in as many Famous Players theatres as possible from coast to coast.

FESTIVALS & COMPETITIONS

A film program is being organized for the White House Conference on Children which will be held in Washington December 13-18 of this year. Four thousand people are expected to attend and festivals of films for, by and about children will be one of the feature attractions. Information on any such films should be sent to Victor Margolin, Children and Youth, P.O. Box 19, Washington, D.C. 20044, who will then request preview prints of the films which might be appropriate for Conference use.

●

The next International Film Festival of Nyon (Switzerland) will take place October 20-25. The Festival will highlight films (in 16mm and 35mm) illustrating the theme "Human Society" (in competition for the Golden Sesterce), but there will also be out-of-competition showings, retrospectives and discussion groups. Deadline for entry: August 31. For more information write: Festival de Nyon, c/o Maison Lavanchy, CH-1001 Lausanne, Switzerland.

●

The Third Annual Monterey Independent Film-Makers Festival (with $1200 in cash awards being made for the first time) will be held August 26-29. 8mm, Super 8 and 16mm prints are all acceptable (no longer than 45 minutes though), if they were completed after September 1, 1969. All films, entry forms and entry fees ($3 per film) must reach the festival committee before August 3. Write: Monterey Independent Film-Makers Festival, Community Services Office, Monterey Peninsula College, 980 Fremont, Monterey, California 93940.

●

The Chicago International Film Festival (November 7-21, 1970) is asking filmmakers of all ages and all nations to conceive, design and produce an original 60-second motion picture (16mm or 35mm) exploring man's existing state: "The Condition of Man". First-prize winner picks up a Gold Hugo and $1000. Winners and honourable mentions go on a world-wide tour in 1971. For more information write: Michael J. Kutza, Jr., Director, 6th Annual Chicago International Film Festival, 12 East Grand Avenue, Room 301, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Films and entry fees ($5 per film) must reach the Festival by October 1.

●

The University Film Association, the University Film Foundation, and Eastman Kodak Company have announced their 8th annual awards competition. The 1970 Teen-Age Movie Awards are open to all teen-agers (12-19) living in the United States and Canada. Closing date: September 15. For more information write: Kodak Teen-Age Movie Awards, Department 840P, Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y. 14650.

●

The second annual Canadian Student Film Festival will be held at Montreal's Sir George Williams University in September. Entry deadline is August 21. For entry forms and information, write: Conservatory of Cinematographic Art, Sir George Williams University, 1435 Drummond Street, Montreal 107, P.Q.

●

This year's Leipzig Documentary and Short Film Festival for Cinema and Television Films will be held November 21-28. Entries to the competition (which features first prize of a Golden Dove—valued at $800—in each of five categories) can be documentaries for cinema or television, as well as popular scientific films and cartoons. Prize-winners in past years have included Richard Leacock, the Maysles, Emile de Antonio and Peter Gessner. For more information, write: XII International Leipzig Film Festival, Burgstrasse 27, 102 Berlin, German Democratic Republic.

●

The International Film and TV Festival of New York will be held October 27-30 at New York's Americana Hotel. Additional details and entry forms can be had by writing the Festival at 121 West 45th Street, New York, New York 10036.

○

Unaccustomed as we are to reviewing new film magazines (we've only got 32 pages each issue, after all), there is one we would like to mention: *Filmograph* a lively, well written, well researched, good looking quarterly devoted to the history of film. A recent issue (*Filmograph*'s second) contains, among other things, exhaustive articles on early stars Priscilla Dean, Alice White and Dorothy Mackaill, plus a look at the Cisco Kid — all four of them. Single copies ($2.00) and one-year (4 issue) subscriptions ($7.00) may be had by writing the editor — Murray Summers — at 7926 Ashboro Drive, Alexandria, Va. 22309.

○

TAKE ONE is proud to announce that noted filmmaker and critic Gordon Hitchens has joined our ranks as a Contributing Editor. Mr. Hitchens is the former editor of Film Comment.

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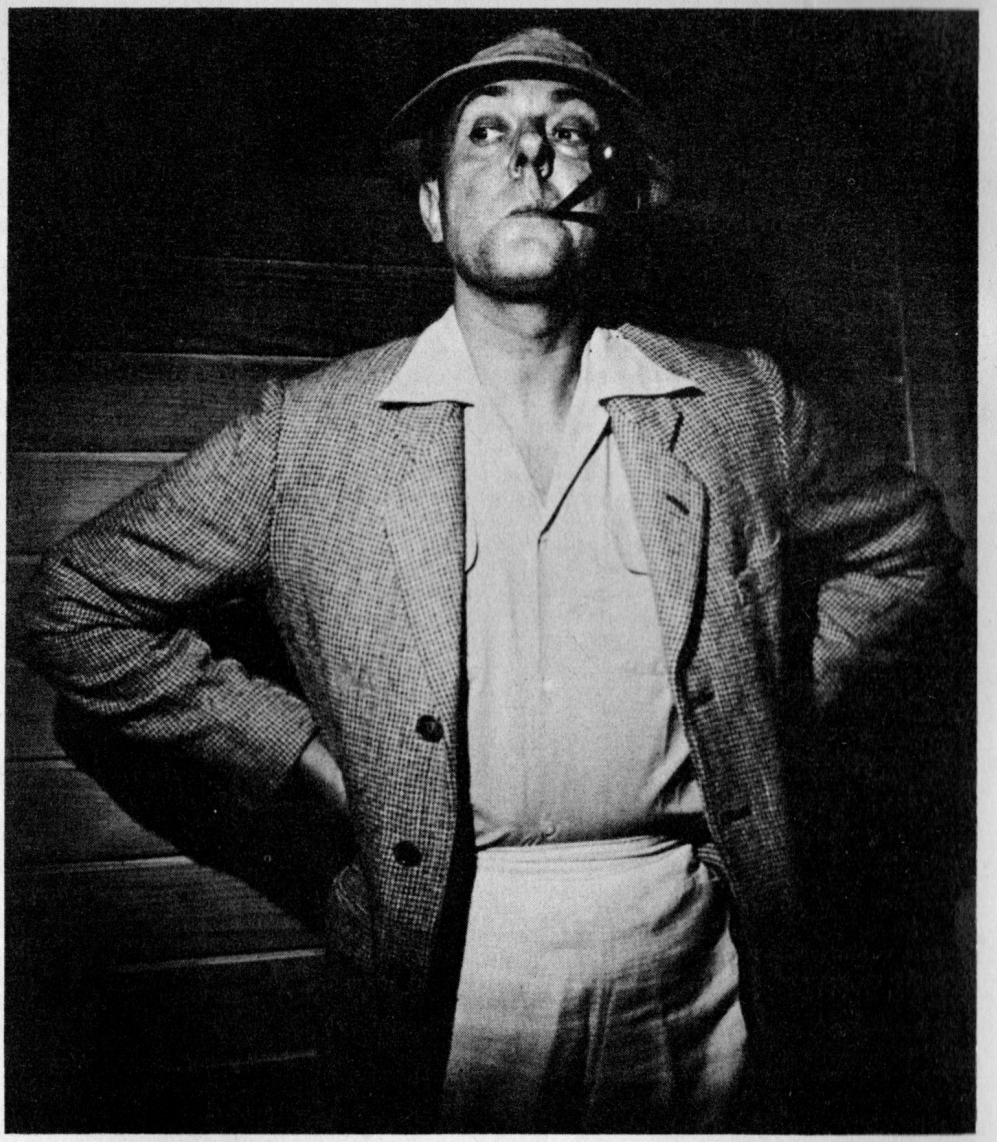
TATI SPEAKS

by HAROLD G. WOODSIDE



"I want to open a big window in comedy: I want to say 'Hello'. That's why I'm here today, to say 'Hello'."

Jacques Tati had come from Paris to speak to a large English audience at the National Film Theatre on London's South Bank. It was late November and he was here to give the final lecture of the autumn series sponsored by the John Player Tobacco Company. Before him came Dick Lester and George Axelrod. For the first lecture Jean-Luc Godard didn't bother to show up and sent a telegram reading, "*If* I do not turn up, take any man from the streets, the poorest if possible, and speak to him of film and images and he will be able to tell you more about films than I can." It was signed, "Your Anonymous Godard." Well this was indeed Godard and his message was received with a symphony of boos and cheers. Half the audience walked out and the more tolerant half sat thru a screening of *Vivre Sa Vie*. Jacques Tati came because he loves all people and he *wanted* to say hello.

I was sitting on the floor near the stage, (where I had carefully positioned my tape recorder) and I was leaning against the wall by a door that led into the auditorium. The hilarious exerpt from Tati's *Jour De Fete* had just finished. The house lights oozed on and the audience laughter began to die down as a young man boarded the stage to introduce Mr. Tati. From behind the door I heard a quiet, deep voice say, very frenchly, "It is a good audience. I can tell: We were trained to tell such things in the music hall."

"For an entertainer of such universal appeal, no introduction is necessary. I give you Jacques Tati."

Mr. Tati came out of the doorway and took his place on the stage. Five minutes later the auditorium was quietened down enough for him to begin to speak. Jacques Tati is now a man of 60 and since *Mon Oncle*, his hair has changed to an iron grey, his face has become more deeply lined, and he has put on some weight, (compare photos of Hulot from *Holiday* to those of *Playtime*). He is a shy man with a constant smile and a quiet voice and I am not popping you corn when I say that he has a definite sense of humility about him. From the beginning of the lecture he was self-conscious of his inability to express himself in English as well as he would have liked. But he did all right and the audience truly loved him; you could feel it.

Brenda Davies says, "The essential thing about Tati the actor is that his is a mime, and a mime in the great music hall tradition . . . actions, for Tati, speak much louder than words." To help him with the lecture Jacques Tati used footage from his four films, Rene Clement's *Soigne Ton Gauche* which showed Tati as a farm boy who dreams of being a champion boxer, and some rare footage of a film by Little Tich called *Big Boots*.

At the end of the lecture, Mr. Tati was still not satisfied with the way he chose to express his ideas to the audience and to everyone's delight, he told the manager of the cinema that those who were queueing up outside to see a film due to start in half an hour would just have to wait. For one golorious half hour longer Jacques Tati performed his great mimes for us to round off what he felt he had to say. Some of his best mimes included *The Tennis Player* (see photos from Hulot's Holiday), and the *Rugby Goalie* (before he began his career Tati was a member of France's first division team of Racing Club de France). All throughout the lecture Tati would improvise and play around with the chairs, the mikes, the interviewer and the audience. At one point a man from the audience unconsciously addressed Tati as M. Hulot and he received acknowledgement in a classic manner.

Jacques Tati has scripted and acted in:
Oscar, Champion de Tennis (unfinished), 1932;
Gai Dimanche, 1935;
Soigne Ton Gauche, 1936;
L'Ecole des Facteurs, 1947;
and *Cours de Soir*, 1967, as short films.
Sylvie Et Le Fantome;
and *Le Diable Au Corps*, as Feature films.

He has scripted, directed, and acted in:
Jour De Fete, 1947;
Les Vacances De M. Hulot, 1951
Mon Oncle, 1958;
and *Playtime*, 1967.

Brenda Davies says briefly of Tati's work; "As a director, Tati's style is subtle and reserved. He rarely uses close-up and his camera movements are spare and unobtrusive. He finds colour a natural medium and does not use it for purely decorative purposes. His timing is meticulous and his gags build up slowly, often seeming to break off just as they reach their climax—he prefers to let the audience dot the i's and cross the t's for themselves."

Jacques Tati was born in 1908 at Pecqm near Saint-Germaine-en-Laye. His grandfather was a picture framer and, says Tati, ". . . he often framed pictures for Toulouse-Lautrec. My father kept the business and I was sent to London, (where he discovered Rugby football). Every day I travelled from Charing Cross to St. John's Lewisham. I wanted to look English; I wore a hard hat, a 'melon'; everybody in the train smoked a pipe, so I bought one too. But a new pipe, you know, it is terrible . . . "

He returned to France where his friends urged him to go into the music halls with his mime acts of atheletes in action. His big break on the stage came in 1934 when he played at the Ritz in Paris. From there he went all over Europe with his act and began to make short films. In 1947, with the aid of his friendship with Rene Clement and Fred Orain, he made a short called *L'Ecole Des Facteurs*, about Francois the Postman. Clement had taken ill and Tati was assigned to direct the film. It was later remade as a feature called *Jour De Fete*. From then on Jacques Tati was off to make his Hulot films.

During his early days in the music hall, Tati used to arrive for work very early in the morning, often broke, and always very cold:

"We had rehearsals at quarter past nine, and you arrive and it's very well organized. You, of course, had to arrive in time to get into your make-up and you had to be ready and it's very difficult to be funny at quarter past nine. Especially if you have only the Director and his secretary who sits there and just looks at you like this . . . and says, 'mmmmm . . . maybe I will put him in the second number . . . maybe the eighth . . . maybe he would even open the show.' And so I find myself not very funny, at all, and I would go into the streets to the little market place and watching the people there, I would find that everybody was funny . . . except me. And that is why in my films I try to show more and more of the ordinary people in life and their comedy."

●

Who began film comedy?

"I think that all the great early film comedians, Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel and Hardy . . . all had their start in the music hall and so they were all of that tradition. The first comedy film was made by Little Tich. It was a music hall act recorded on film. There was no film technique, no cutting, just a simple camera. It was an act called *Big Boots* and it was outstanding because the performer achieved so much comedy through his movement in an extremely large pair of shoes . . . a very funny film. It is the point of departure for all that has been done in comedy. Afterwards, everything came from the music hall; the great school of Chaplin, Keaton, Max Linder, etc . . . "

Chaplin and Keaton?

"Chaplin is different, because Chaplin is a very serious comic. He wanted to show everything . . . he doesn't make the new generation laugh the way Keaton does. He wants to be 'significant'. His films are sociological. The new generation won't accept that. Keaton doesn't act: he endures."

●

About your attitude towards observation and your serious attitude toward humour?

"Well I am trying . . . even from the music hall I am trying to tell you that what I like is to observe the people because I do feel that in life, if you do watch all round, you begin to see the little everyday things in life that are unique in themselves. I am always trying to put the gag over not only as invention, but only by trying to show you that my funny situations actually happen. But my job has not only been to imitate the way the people act, but to show also why their attitudes are funny.

You see, in my position I think that every great comedian is trying to show in his way what he finds funny. So when you think in *Jour De Fete* that the Postman (Tati), is the one who says, 'I am the funny fellow in the film. I can fool the bicycle; I can pull a gag; I am the gagman . . . ' and that is a little bit of the old time comedy, yes? And what I have been trying with Hulot is to show that the things that happen to Hulot are the things that can happen to everybody. Not just to invent a gag for the audience—to be a good gagman—but

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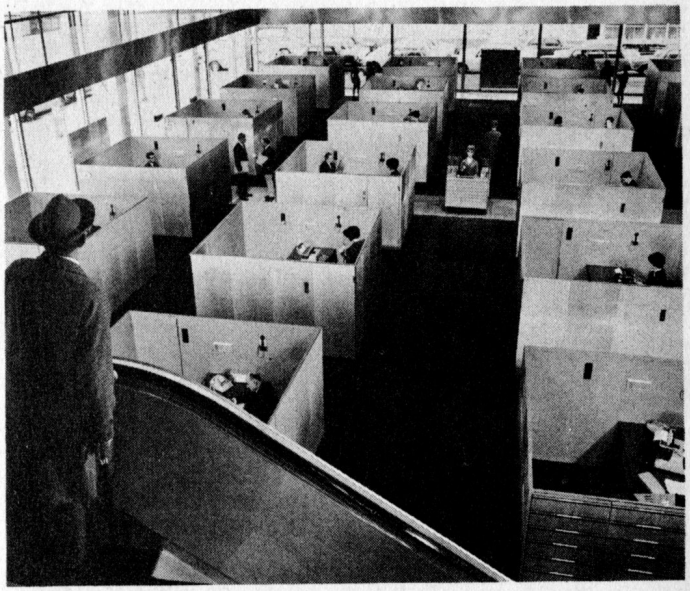
PLAYTIME

PLAYTIME

to just show that this character, even waiting for an autobus, something unique and funny can happen to him.

So if I try to explain what I am trying to do, there are two ways in which I can show you on the screen what and why I feel something is funny: One is *Observation*, and I always go back to that point, because I think, for *myself* that is most important; and the other ingredient is *Invention*. I don't like the way they do comedy today. They talk too much. I am a visual person."

●

A comment about sound in your films?

"Sound is very important in my films. I think that sound can bring out much more comedy in a film when it is used carefully with the image. In *Jour De Fete*, in the scene where you have the Postman going over the bridge, you don't see him, you only hear the noise of his feet. Take Hulot's car, in *Hulot's Holiday*; the shape of the car is not *as* funny as the noise the car makes. So you know before you see the image that the car is coming by the noise the engine of his car makes and this adds effects to the comedy of the film. When, in *Hulot's Holiday*,his car rolls into a cemetery where a service is taking place. It is a very solemn occasion but Hulot is just concerned about fixing the flat tire. In the mime, Hulot drops the rubber tube of the tire, and it has many leaves sticking to its surface when he takes it from the ground. A florist comes by with a wreath for the funeral, and when he sees Hulot standing holding the tire with the leaves, he goes over and takes it from Hulot, thinking it is another wreath for the funeral. So in this ridiculous way Hulot becomes involved in the service of the funeral. Then the people help him into his car and give it a push. When it is out of sight, we hear the noise of the motor. This is what gives the scene humour. It is the only real noise in the entire scene.

It is Hulot who takes up his journey again as if nothing had happened. The sound is not more funny than the image but together they produce some very funny effects. That is why I spent some time with Buster Keaton. I will not say that he liked *Hulot's Holiday*, but he did like the way I used the sound in *Hulot's Holiday* and he asked me to do the sound for his picture. For I know I did put in the sound effect, not to exaggerate the image or the movement (like in the Laurel and Hardy film, when they take off their hat you hear a whistle sound—and you hear a whistle sound when they put it back on). That is exaggeration. You know they are making fun of the hat. So I believe in using sound in a funny way but not in exaggeration. On the airplane I always find the hostess funny, not because I do not hear what she is saying; it is not the hostess who is funny but the sound of the dialogue, the *way* the mike works that is funny."

●

Jour De Fete *was originally a colour film, yes?*

"Yes, I shot *Jour De Fete* in colour and the negative was in colour but the print was in black and white unfortunately [a new process, 'Thomson-colour', had been used but it did not work out. —Ed.]. And it is a pity you know, because the little village, the little town was very black and white, dark. And the only colour was brought to it by the fairground, the merry-go-round, etc. And the little town began to gain some colour until the end when the fair left, the little town began to become dark again. This is how I think we can use colour in film.

And the same for *Hulot's Holiday*. I had tried to say to the people, 'I wish I could shoot *Hulot's Holiday* in colour.' But they refused and said to me 'No, it is not possible because *Jour De Fete* was in black and white and it was not successful the way you used the colour.' And now everytime I see *Hulot's Holiday*, in black and white, I feel a little bit sad because in the script I did use colour in this way. In the beginning of the picture all the people who start the holiday were white, and the longer they stayed, the darker they would become. So when somebody arrived who was white, on the beach, you knew he was a newcomer.

Mon Oncle was the first film the public saw in colour. I was the only one who saw *Jour De Fete* in colour.

What I try to do in *Playtime* is put the colour in the film only when I wanted you to see something in colour. Now, if the gentleman is on the image, and he is a very important fellow and he has something very important to say by the dialogue or by the movement; and say I have made the mistake of giving him a black tie, and say I had the job of coming in as an usher and I was wearing a red tie; then when the important actor is saying his lines or going through his movements, the audience would be obliged to look at me with the red tie who has nothing to do with the film except to stand in the background and the scene would be lost. So what I have tried to do in *Playtime* is to put the colour where I want the people to watch, and say, 'Here is a very important fellow.' If you noticed the flowers on the hats of the American tourists on the escalator, you see what I mean. Naturally in *Playtime* I use a lot of very long shots; to show you the situation, etc, and I use the colour to help the audience look where I think it is important to look. I don't know if it works but I try my best."

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"Some people say that I am hostile to modern architecture in my films. I think it is a little bit too easy for people to try to explain it in this way because in *My Uncle*, it is not about the house. I am sure if a young couple were married and went to live in that house, they would be happy. They would be happy because they would put down a little ground and they would play football with their children. They would have the big window for the sun to come into their home; they would cook with all the modern facilities and they would be happy. It is not the architecture I am complaining about in *My Uncle*, it is the *way* the people use it that is the problem."

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"I went to a cinéclub one day and I saw *Hulot's Holiday*. In the film I had to put a little white barrier, a fence, across the screen because the house of the young lady was looking too close to the beach. And that was painted white, to have the image between the beach and the house. Some one asked me a question at the end because the old English woman jumped over the little barrier to say good-bye to Hulot; the man said, 'That little barrier is for you symbolic; separating the world of the rich and successful from the world of the poor and young people and because the lady jumped over the barrier, it is symbolic.' And I didn't know what to say to him because the little fence was just for the image, it was not very symbolic. So I was a little embarrassed. Sometimes in a film, things happen and sometimes they are preferred; sometimes they are not so preferred. And sometimes they turn out good and sometimes they do not turn out as good as expected. So we try our best to make the people laugh without very many heavy situations."

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Ever thought of making a musical?

"I have great artistic control of my films. The people put the money up and it has to work to buy me a chance to make another film. Now after *Playtime* I have to wait and see how it does. I don't know what I'm going to do. I know I would like it very much to make a very funny musical but you know, you suffer a lot before you can hear ten people laugh in the cinema. On the stage you get your reward at once. In the cinema into the bargain, you're working against technicians. The cameraman is thinking only of his picture; the script girl of her continuity. The cinema is thought of as teamwork, but the director is always alone, because he is never understood."

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In Playtime, *in the restaurant scene, so much is going on on the large screen at one time that is almost impossible to take everything in on one viewing. Do you rehearse every little detail before you shoot a scene or is most of the action improvised?*

"I rehearse all the movements. If the man has to go around the chair then I show him the way he has to go around the chair. And with each one I show them what I would like them to do. But then I put on the music so to create an atmosphere so they are not afraid when the clapper-boy steps in front of the camera and begins the scene, and they freeze on you. When the music is on I go out into the set and talk to them about the scene and get them relaxed and *involved*. You see, in *Playtime*, what I want is *participation*. I don't say YOU MUST LOOK AT THAT; I try to open a window. I try my best to open it the best way I can. So I say, 'Please look at that; if you find something funny, O.K. Maybe you won't find anything funny in the picture.' But it is interesting to know that young people of fourteen years old or so, like the film because they are fast; they have seen everything. They are being born into life. And I do think that *Playtime* is no longer MY picture; it's the way you like it or you don't. You may go to see it again and you find that you like it and you like the people. It is not a picture that you say, 'I am the Author, I am the Director; I am the Gagman and here, Ah ha ha ha.' Maybe the man you will find funny in the film will not be the same one someone else will find funny. You may find everyone funny or no one funny. But I tell you, you will not see anything very funny if you are waiting for someone in London Airport, and they are twenty minutes late and you are sitting there looking at your watch telling yourself that they are twenty minutes late. But I would sit there and maybe see the best show of the week, looking at everyone coming and going; at the hostesses; at the pilots; at everyone. And if you sit in *Playtime* looking into your watch, then it is a very long picture. So it is by observation that we see life going on about us and the comedy you can see everywhere you look and that is what I try to do in *Playtime*. You go to London Airport sometime and sit for two minutes, and watch the people." ■

NUCLEAR FILMS

by JOE KANE

Manhattan Project Presents
THE ATOMIC BOMB

Produced by: J. Robert Oppenheimer. Directed by: Harry S. Truman. Released: August 5, 1945, Hiroshima, Japan. Cost: 78,150. A USA Production.

The second sneak preview took place in Nagasaki a few days later and added a convulsive coda to World War II as well as ushering in an era of intense nuclear competition between world moguls US and USSR, inspiring in the former a wave of anxiety and paranoia that reached its crest, if not its climax, in McCarthy's psychotic witchhunt. A sudden surreal realization that world annihilation was now just a button away engendered a horde of wildly careening terrors bearing new and ominous names like 'atomic bomb,' 'H-Bomb,' radioactive fallout,' overkill.' Red menaces, godless conspiracies, flying saucer scares, and uranium booms were thrown into the confused whirlpool of post-war insecurity and left crackling lines and foreign loose ends that had to be somehow worked into the overall American mythological structure before the hysteria could subside. Hollywood assigned itself the role of subconscious shaman and, in an effort to exploit technologically-induced fears instilled by the new instability of world existence, proceeded (for profit first and purpose second) to investigate the thematic possibilities of nuclear energy. Between 1950 and 1965, scores of films dealing in one way or another with the presence of nuclear energy were released, most of them directed at exploring a belligerent sense of national guilt felt—through thick self-righteous masks and reinforced underground shelters— by a great many Americans. A comparison between Truman's bomb and Hitler's camps would not be a fatuous one.

Of the delayed-reaction wave of B productions that crowded the screen during the 50's, most explored the jekyll-hyde duality inherent in the human manipulation of the neutral but potent id-forces of nuclear energy. These films associated a constructive use of this force with paradisal visions of a clean and efficient future, while destructive manipulation conjured up nuclear nightmares and hellfire images of horrible mutations, rampaging resurrections of the Primal Beast, orgasmic holocausts, and atomic floods bent on convulsing and vaporizing the world or banishing its tainted survivors to primitive pasts full of caves and saber teeth. The nightmare proved the richer side of the dream-nightmare dialectic and the one that Hollywood and, ironically, Japanese, filmmakers found more profitable to investigate.

Most specimens of the nuclear film can be classified under the genre of the horror film although some, like the films of other cross-genres, can also be placed under the heading of comedy (*The Atomic Kid*), satire (*Dr. Strangelove*), simulated documentary (*The War Game*) or suspense (*Split-Second*). References to the bomb occur in a great many post-war films not mentioned here—not dealt with directly but felt rather as a presence, as it was throughout the 50's in both real and reel life.

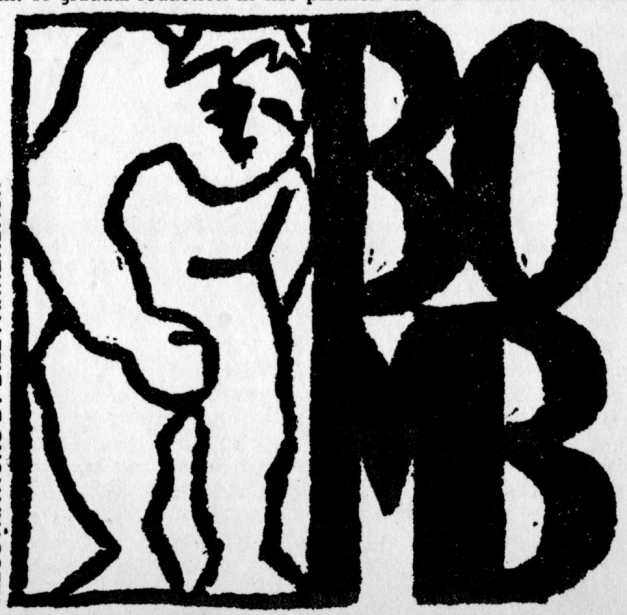
One of the first films to depict a nuclear war was Arch Oboler's *Five* released in 1951, a film that fed the fascination with the uninhabited world through the nuclear transformation of earth into another, mysterious planet of silence. The film that, more than any other, ended the cycle by reducing to farce the suicidal possibilities of atomic warfare, as well as exposing the competitive paranoia inspired by nuclear invention, was Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*. Since Kubrick's film (released the same year—1964—as *Fail-Safe* and *Seven Days In May*) the status of the atomic bomb as either 20th century ogre or saviour has diminished as the threat of world obliteration has become institutionalized and woven into the existing pattern of American cultural mythology. Nuclear films of the 50's and early 60's both fed the hysteria and eventually starved it out through formula repetition.

(I see as a possible replacement for the waning nuclear 'instant of terror' films a rise in suspense films exploiting the image of the cool, anonymous, post-hysteria killer, the kind played by Tuesday Weld in Noel Black's *Pretty Poison* and by Tim O'Kelly in Peter Bogdanovich's *Targets*, whose acts of destruction are performed in a non-malicious, mechanically giddy manner. These characters are alienated sleepwalkers with no planned victims; pressured people who have smiled one too many smiles at the wrong side of the plastic American media-carnival joke and hypnotically follow a quiet urge to climb off the merry-go-round and try the target range. The Karloff-Lugosi personality monsters of the 30's and 40's, along with the post-war atomic mutations, pale beside the Specks and Whitmans whose killing sprees result from a dimly comprehended curiosity and whose victims are the flesh-turned-cardboard strangers who happen to get in the way. Films like *Pretty Poison* and *Targets* seem to be working out a general feeling of national guilt adrenalized by recent mass murders and political assassinations in this country. They are also paralleled by the sarcastic destruction dealt out by James Bond and his imitators and the carefree, childlike rampage of Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* or Peckinpah's *Wild Bunch*—characters on whom urbanization hangs very loosely.)

If the nuclear film can then be seen as an independent genre, it itself encompasses four basic subgenres. These are the Contamination-Mutation film, the Bestial Invocation film, the Post-Holocaust film, and the Warning film. Each subgenre works out a separate angle of the general reordering process, the mutation of myths, stemming from the sudden appearance of a new and transfiguring force.

The Contamination-Mutation theme runs throughout a series of—for the most part—formula films computing the possible range of effects of wayward radioactivity on isolated man. Stretching the imagination in certain limited directions and spawning after each successful film a litter of reproductions, the typical contamination film portrays an atomic pioneer (*Creeping Unknown*) or lost convict (*Most Dangerous Man Alive*—Allen Dwan's last film) who accidentally absorbs radioactive particles in a lab or on a nuclear testing ground and subsequently grows tall (*The Amazing Colossal Man*) or small (*The Incredible Shrinking Man*) or zombie-like (*Creature with the Atom Brain*) or scaly (*First Man Into Space*) or metallic (*Most Dangerous Man Alive*) or beastlike (*Hand of Death*) and, inevitably, insane, shorn of his original identity. The message following the usually ironic and ambiguous (to allow for a possible sequel) destruction of the civilization-stripped mutant is invariably a variation of the 'when will we (or Man or Russia) learn not to mess with the ways of nature (or God or the United States)'. The answer is a rueful shake of some important survivor's head, a final, distanced shot of the fallen monster, a victim of forces beyond his control or understanding, and THE END? ? ?

All films dealing with nuclear energy are based on roughly the same equation: advanced technology plus primitive emotion equal disaster. However, in most of these films, nuclear contamination serves primarily as an excuse to spring a makeup man's monster on a young or undemanding audience, and real variations within this subgenre are rare. One film that does allow the mutated character a certain amount of reflection is Jack Arnold's *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. A gradual reduction in size parallels the individual's decreasing



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BILL FAHRENBACH

influence on the future of an increasingly pushbutton, media-dominated, urbanized world on the edge. The film retreats along with the character (Grant Williams) through ever-diminishing worlds; from a normal, adjusted domestic scene, through hospitals and treatments, an affair with a female midget, and battles with giant cats and gargantuan spiders before he finally evolves into a microscopic kernel of pure disembodied consciousness; a metaphor for the wholesale devaluation of human flesh.

The Bestial Invocation film, the second subgenre of the nuclear film, works somewhat differently. Rooted in the myth that nature's will is ultimately stronger than man's and that the struggle between them is a conscious one, these films involve a resurrection of the primal beast—the dinosaur and grotesque variations—as an instrument of punishment for nuclear misuse, one capable of catapulting man back into the saber teeth of brutal daily survival. The formula in these films has an atomic blast either loosen a mountain, volcano, or ocean floor to awaken a long sleeping prehistoric beast, or has the fallout contaminate and magnify a normal animal or insect. The nuclear misbegotten are often destroyed by another bomb (in films stressing the jekyll-hyde duality) or through more primitive means like fire (in films emphasizing the forked paths taken by nature and technology). The creatures revived or magnified may be outsized ants (*Them!*), spiders (*Tarantula*), grasshoppers (*Beginning of the End*), praying mantis (*The Deadly Mantis*), dinosaurs (*Giant Behemoth*), or spontaneously-generated types like those that turn up in *The Cosmic Monsters.* The bestial invocation film is generally still less imaginative than the contamination film, depending too heavily on sheer size and special effects while posing the question 'how will it be destroyed? ' rather than dwelling on the mythical variation towards which the transformation is pointing. Gordon Douglas' *Them!* is probably the most effective—at least as far as evoking a mood of terror is concerned—although most probably this success is due to an uncomfortable familiarity with his subject: ants make a more familiar enemy than do dinosaurs. The message delivered after the Beast's demise repeats that of the contamination film: any Faustian gluttony is bound to back up on you.

Post-Holocaust Societies films explore the possibilities of post-nuclear societal reconstruction either on a national or microcosmic level. Microcosm films like *Five* and *The World, The Flesh, and the Devil* have a handful of nuclear survivors gradually falling into the same fear-manipulation-jealousy-violence-guilt patterns that first prompted the invention of technological aggression-extensions like the bomb to begin with. Other films, like *Teenage Caveman,* show the world regressing to a one million B.C. setting. Visions of anemic, mechanistic super-structures are found in *The Time Machine, World Without End,* and *Creation of the Humanoids.* This last film (Andy Warhol's all-time favorite) is a neatly restrained satire of man metamorphosing into machine which mirrors the American slavery system. Robots called 'clickers' are built to carry out menial chores and are overwatched by the fascistic, Klan-like Order of the Flesh and Blood who find out that many of their own number are also machines. Peter Watkins' *War Game* is the most grimly realistic of these post-attack films, employing a cinema verité style for a fuller feeling of civilization demonically disjointed. Other noteworthy films in this subgenre are Peter Brooks' *Lord of the Flies* and Roger Corman's little-known *Last Woman On Earth.*

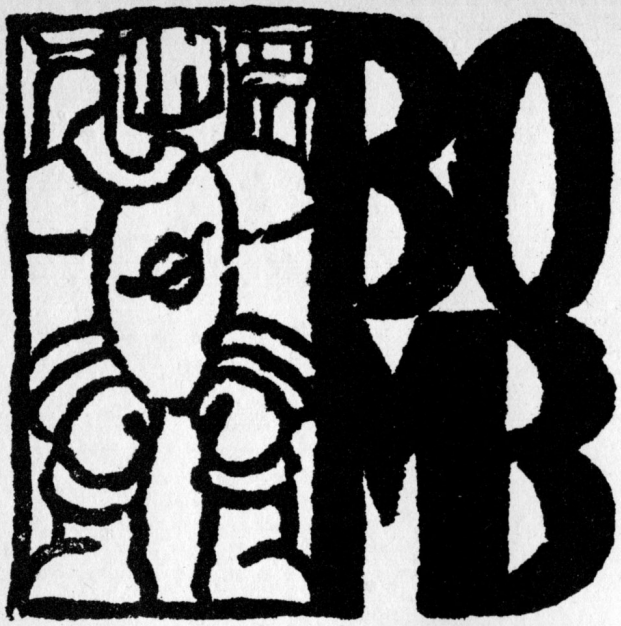
The fourth and final subgenre of the nuclear film is the Warning film. Warnings can originate from outer space *(Day the Earth Stood Still*), unborn people of the future (*The Flight That Disappeared*), concerned Americans (*Invasion USA*), or God Himself (*The Next Voice You Hear*) and usually take the forms of illustrated lectures on man's inability to control the forces of nuclear energy that he has harnessed. Films like *Invasion USA* and *Red Planet Mars* were paranoid right-wing propaganda films released at the height of the McCarthy Era, warning Americans not against the human use of the bomb, but against Russia's (a distinction frequently made throughout the 50's). *Invasion USA* was a little parable, padded generously with old stock footage, revolving about the slogan "less tractors, more tanks," whose science was as intelligent as its politics. Warnings from within are concerned with the possibilities of accidental attacks (dramatized by *Fail-Safe* and satirized by *Dr. Strangelove*), runaway warheads (*The Lost Missile*), autonomous nuclear energy (*Magnetic Monster*), and an internal buildup of frustrated atomic power (*The Night the World Exploded*). Although a warning is implied in every nuclear film, this particular group relies, through the visitor from space or the local prophet, on an explicit 'or else' stance rather than concentrating on the perverse side-effects (human mutation, bestial invocation) of misdirected nuclear energy.

Aside from a good deal of destruction, hysteria, righteous editorializing, spying, sermonizing, and shelter-building, the bomb has inspired, directly at least, little in the way of lasting films. Perhaps the presence of the bomb deflates the power of the 'mummy complex' of André Bazin: not even mummies are safe. Nuclear energy has been generally exploited by quickie producers aiming to cash in while the threat remained hot. The threat became an internalized part of the American psyche and films of this sort faded out.

Only a handful of screen classics emerged: *The Incredible Shrinking Man, Creation of the Humanoids, Day the Earth Stood Still, Dr. Strangelove,* and sequences from other films (notably the countdown scene that concludes *Fail-Safe* and parts of Losey's *The Damned,* Peter Brooks' *Lord of the Flies,* and Peter Watkins' *War Game*). These few films survive as something more than pop-cultural curiosity pieces. Still, though the body of nuclear films may be cinematically negligable, they remain an important part of the cultural seismograph of American mass media. Critic Joseph Altshuler has remarked that "Nothing dates a drama or film faster than an outmoded war." The Cold War is no exception. While the possibility of world annihilation has not disappeared, the more obvious film propaganda has. The cruder propaganda produced by the cold war in times too fast for reflection stand out as being hopelessly naïve, low-grade efforts assuming a pugnaciously defensive and tritely moralistic position, blaming the corruption of nuclear energy on either monstrous Russia or abstracted Man.

The films mentioned above are cited because they represent imaginative wanderings within the confines of a genre. Just as the western has become a kind of film version of the white man's blues—with basic rules, beats, and measures that talented directors and actors may play variations on—so the nuclear film, too, developed patterns for its short term of minor favour.

A partial list of nuclear films follows, with director's name (wherever possible) immediately following the year of release.



CONTAMINATION-MUTATION

Amazing Colossal Man; 1957; Bert Gordon. Glenn Langan, Cathy Downs.

Amazing Transparent Man; 1960; Edgar G. Ulmer. Douglas Kennedy, Marguerite Chapman.

Atomic Brain; 1964; ? . Erica Peters, Judy Bamber.

Atomic Kid; 1954; Leslie H. Martinson. Mickey Rooney, Robert Strauss.

Atomic Man; 1956; Kenneth Hughes. Gene Nelson, Faith Domergue.

Beast of Yucca Flats; 1961; Coleman Francis. Douglas Mellor, Tor Johnson.

Creature With the Atom Brain; 1955; ? . Richard Denning, Angela Stevens.

Creeping Unknown; 1956; Val Guest. Brian Donlevy.

Cyclops; 1957; Bert Gordon. James Craig, Gloria Talbot.

First Man Into Space; 1959; Robert Day. Marshall Thompson, Marla Landi.

4D Man; 1959; Irwin Yeaworth. Robert Lansing, Lee Meriwether.

Hand of Death; 1962; Gene Nelson. John Agar, Paula Raymond.

Horror of Party Beach; 1964; Del Tenney. John Scott.

Incredible Shrinking Man; 1957; Jack Arnold. Grant Williams, Randy Stuart.

Indestructible Man; 1956; ? . Lon Chaney.

Most Dangerous Man Alive; 1961; Allen Dwan, Ron Randell, Debra Paget.

War of the Colossal Beast; 1958; Bert Gordon. Dean Parkin, Sally Fraser.

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BESTIAL-INVOCATION

Atomic Submarine; 1959; Spencer G. Bennett. Arthur Franz, Dick Foran.

Attack of the Crab Monsters; 1957; Roger Corman. Richard Garland, Pamela Duncan.

Beach Girls and the Monsters; 1965; Jon Hall. Jon Hall, Sue Casey.

Beast From 20,000 Fathoms; 1953; Eugene Lourie. Paul Christian, Paula Raymond.

Beast with 1,000,000 Eyes; 1956; ? . Paul Birch.

Beginning of the End; 1957; ? . Peter Graves.

Black Scorpion; 1957; Edward Ludwig. Richard Denning, Mara Corday.

Bride of the Monster; 1956; ? . Bela Lugosi.

Cosmic Monsters; 1959; Gilbert Gunn. Forrest Tucker, Gaby Andre.

Deadly Mantis; 1957; Nathan Juran. Craig Stevens.

Dinosaurus! ; 1960; Irwin Yeaworth. Ward Ramsey, Kristina Hanson.

Giant Behemoth; 1959; Eugene Lourie. Gene Evans, Andre Morell.

Giant Gila Monsters; 1959; Ray Kellogg. Don Sullivan, Lisa Simone.

Giant Leeches; 1959; Bernard L. Kowalski. Ken Clark.

It Came From Beneath the Sea; 1955; Robert Gordon. Kenneth Tobey, Faith Domergue.

Killer Shrews; 1959; Ray Kellogg. James Best.

Monster From the Ocean Floor; 1954; Roger Corman. Anne Kimball, Stuart Wade.

Monster That Challenged the World; 1957; Arnold Laven. Tim Holt, Audrey Dalton.

Spider; 1958; Bert Gordon. Ed Kemmer, June Kenney.

Tarantula; 1956; Jack Arnold. John Agar, Leo G. Carroll.

Them! ; 1954; Gordon Douglas. James Whitmore, Edmund Gwenn.

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POST-HOLOCAUST SOCIETIES

(Microcosms)

Day the World Ended; 1956; Roger Corman. Richard Denning, Lori Nelson.

Five; 1951; Arch Oboler. William Phipps, Susan Douglas.

Last Woman On Earth; 1960, Roger Corman. Antony Carbone, Betsy Jones-Moreland.

Lord of the Flies; 1962; Peter Brooks.

On the Beach; 1959; Stanley Kramer. Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner.

Panic In the Year Zero; 1962; Ray Milland. Ray Milland, Richard Bakalyan.

Target: Earth; 1954; ? . Richard Denning.

This Is Not a Test; 1962; ? . Seamon Glass, Mary Morlas.

World, the Flesh, and the Devil; 1959; Ranald MacDougall. Harry Belafonte, Mel Ferrer.

(Reconstructed Societies)

Beyond the Time Barrier; 1960; Edgar G. Ulmer. Robert Clarke, Darlene Tompkins.

Captive Women; 1952; ? . Robert Clarke.

Creation of the Humanoids; 1963; Wesly E. Barry. Don Megowan, Erica Elliot.

Planet of the Apes; 1968; Franklin Schaffner. Charlton Heston, Kim Hunter.

Rocket Ship XM; 1950; Kurt Neumann. Lloyd Bridges.

Teenage Caveman; 1958; Roger Corman. Robert Vaughn, Darrah Marshall.

Time Machine; 1960; George Pal. Rod Taylor, Alan Young.

World Without End; 1956; ? . Hugh Marlowe.

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WARNINGS

(From Space)

Cape Canaveral Monsters; 1960; ? . Scott Peters.

Cosmic Man; 1959; Herbert Greene. John Carradine, Bruce Bennett.

Day the Earth Stood Still; 1951; Robert Wise. Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal.

Flight That Disappeared; 1961; Reginald LeBorg. Craig Hill, Paula Raymond.

Forbidden Planet; 1956; Fred M. Wilcox. Walter Pidgeon.

Killers From Space; 1954; W. Lee Wilder. Peter Graves, Barbara Bestar.

Plan 9 From Outer Space; 1956; Edward D. Wood. Gregory Walcott, Mona McKinnon, Bela Lugosi.

Teenagers From Outer Space; 1959; Tom Graeff.

27th Day; 1957; William Asher. Gene Barry.

(Within)

Fail-Safe; 1964; Sidney Lumet. Henry Fonda, Walter Matthau.

Dr. Strangelove Or; How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love The Bomb; 1964; Stanley Kubrick. Peter Sellers, Sterling Hayden, George C. Scott.

Lost Missile; 1958; Lester W. Berke. Robert Loggia.

Magnetic Monster; 1953; Curt Siodmak. Richard Carlson.

Night the World Exploded; 1957; ? . William Leslie, Kathyryn Grant.

Seven Days In May; 1964; John Frankenheimer. Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster, Frederic March.

Underwater City; 1962; Frank MacDonald. Bill Lundigan.

Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea; 1961; Irwin Allen.

(Political Paranoia)

Atomic City; 1952; Jerry Hopper. Gene Barry.

Fearmakers; 1958; Jacques Tourneur. Dana Andrews.

Invasion USA; 1953; ? . Gerald Mohr, Peggy Castle.

Red Hell and Two Below Zero; 1962; William Faralla. Basil Rathbone, Mary Murphy.

Red Menace; 1949; R.G. Springsteen. Robert Rockwell.

Red Planet Mars; 1952; Harry Horner. Peter Graves.

Rocket Attack USA; 1961; Barry Mahon.

Teenage Zombies; 1960; Jerry Warren. Don Sullivan.

(From God)

Next Voice You Hear; 1950; William Wellman. James Whitmore. ■

COSTA-GAVRAS TALKS

Costa-Gavras was born in Athens in 1933. At the age of 19 he went to Paris; while studying for a degree in literature at the Sorbonne, he became fascinated by film and enrolled at L'Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques (IDHEC). He later worked as assistant to Marcel Ophuls, Rene Clair and Rene Clement. In 1964, he made his first film, Compartiment Tueurs (Sleeping Car Murders) *which starred Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Jean-Louis Trintignant and Charles Denner. His next film, in 1966,* Un Homme De Trop (One Man Too Many), *on the Maquis (Resistance) in occupied France, received very poor distribution in North America (United Artists re-titled it* Shock Troops *and, says Gavras, "just threw it away"). He has just completed his latest film,* L'Aveu (The Avowal), *dealing with Stalinist purges in Czechoslovakia during the 50's.*

Costa-Gavras was interviewed by Dan Georgakas, a writer who is active in the anti-junta movement (and who was in Greece in 1963 during the Lambrakis affair), and Gary Crowdus, editor of Cineaste, in which magazine this interview first appeared.

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What were your reasons for making Z?

The main reason for making Z was my Greek origins, of course. I can't see how anyone without those origins could possibly have made such a film. I had been concerned about the Lambrakis murder ever since it occurred in 1963, but after the military coup of 1967, I wanted to do something concrete against the dictatorship. I had also been troubled by the murder of Ben Barka in Paris during the fall of 1965. There were many parallels with Greek events, but the Lambrakis murder had all the classic elements of political conspiracy posed most clearly. It had police complicity, the disappearance of key witnesses, corruption in government -- all those kinds of things. There was the additional question of the way some men make culprits of others. Most important for me was that the Lambrakis affair had a conclusion. There was a trial which produced concrete testimony and evidence. This was not so in the case of Ben Barka or some of the assassinations in the United States.

You mention a parallel with the Ben Barka affair. Were you influenced by the John F. Kennedy assassination? The murder scene, for instance is shown several times and one of the 'replays' is a slow motion, almost frame-by-frame analysis that bears striking similarities to the Zapruder films taken of the JFK assassination.

People here have often mentioned Kennedy, but in Europe no one has really seen the Zapruder films. I hadn't thought of them as having any influence on me. I was more interested in showing how an important event is perceived. First we see it as it actually took place, then as the general retells it, and finally, as a lawyer friend of Z remembers it. The last viewpoint is the most interesting for the man is trying to be very factual. He does not say he saw this or that. The lawyer strives to eliminate new information he has learned since the event and he excludes uncertain details.

It's interesting that Europeans don't see this sequence in relation to the Zapruder film and that Americans would not be likely to see it in relation to the Ben Barka affair.

Yes, none of the reviewers here has mentioned Ben Barka.

The dramatic focus of the film is not Lambrakis but the investigating judge. Could you explain why you chose that dramatic framework?

I thought that showing the story through the investigating judge would be the most effective way of revealing the political situation in Greece. My film hoped to probe the mechanics of political crime. If I had wanted to do justice to the achievements of Gregory Lambrakis, I would have had to make a far different film, a film of his life. I didn't set out to do that. I wanted to study the mechanics. And the investigating judge was truly an incredible character. At any point he was free to halt his investigation. He was quite crucial to the exposé of the police. He was a man of the Right, a man of the Establishment, but he was an honest man.

Your first film, Sleeping Car Murders, *was a detective thriller, which* Z *resembles in its dramatic construction. Do you have a penchant for this type of film or did you think more people could be reached if a political film were presented in this manner?*

It was neither of those. From the time Lambrakis was struck until the time he died three days later, there was intense suspense throughout Greece. The unraveling of the conspiracy was something

that was followed daily in the press. It was nothing I interjected. That was how events took place.

But there were many things that happened that you didn't show. There were public demonstrations, particularly the mammoth funeral in Athens.

But I didn't have 500,000 extras.

Wasn't it possible to use newsreel footage to depict the funeral? It's a popular device now.

As I said before, from the beginning we had decided to do the film as a study of political crime. We did not want sentimental feeling to interfere with that. Had we shown the funeral, the film would have been more revolutionary, but also more sentimental. It was really after the events in the film that the Lambrakis Youth Movement developed into an important force in Greece. As for newsreel, we had also decided from the beginning that it would be a completely directed film with well-known actors playing the major roles. I do not like the use of documentary material in a film like this because I think it cheapens it. I have been working on a documentary, however, which deals with the funeral of George Papandreou. Most of the footage was shot by Greeks hidden in the crowd and then the film was brought out of Greece secretly. But that is something altogether different. That will be a documentary film.

There's an interesting placement of music early in the film. When a black tie crowd comes out of the Bolshoi Ballet you use music from a song that mocks the good Germans of the Nazi era. Obviously you are striking out at the upper class of Thessaloniki which is enjoying ballet at the moment Lambrakis is being killed elsewhere in the city. Are you also criticizing the Soviet Union?

It's more complicated than that. Lambrakis was not in complete agreement with the Soviet Union on a number of issues, including certain positions on Greece. The proof of this is that he scheduled his meeting for the same night as the opening of the Bolshoi in Thessaloniki. I think this is an important point to make.

You've also made a point out of the homosexuality and pederasty of one of the killers. Did you take some liberty in portraying him quite as obnoxiously as you do?

Quite the opposite. We didn't want to stress the fact that he was homosexual. Certainly we aren't saying that the homosexuals are dangerous people or rightists. We had to tone down some of this individual's characteristics to make him more credible. His homosexuality was important because it was the factor which made him a lackey of the police. He was a victim himself. We might have stressed his victimization more, but after all, he was the man who murdered Lambrakis.

Were there other things which you chose to omit or tone down?

Many, but these were things which would have detracted from the film's effect and credibility. When the general was brought for questioning he had a pistol with him which he waved about shouting that he would commit suicide if there was an indictment. That was really too incredible to include . . . something you might expect in a poor Western. At another point, the investigating judge asked him what he had done a particular morning and he answered, "I was looking for my long underwear." Those things would have made him look too foolish. There were other omissions concerning Lambrakis himself. He ran a free clinic for the poor every week. Just before he was killed a little old woman had asked him to look at her sick son and he had agreed to come first thing the next morning. That would have been far too sentimental for the film even though it actually happened. John F. Kennedy sent a telegram to the widow expressing sorrow at the tragedy. At one point we mentioned there had been a telegram from the President of the United States, but it would have been too incredible to mention Kennedy by name. He would be dead himself within a few months.

You build Z to an exhilirating climax where the conspirators are all indicted. Then you more or less pull the rug from under our feet in an epilogue where we learn key witnesses have been killed under mysterious circumstances and that the conspirators have been freed and reinstated by a military coup. Americans will again be reminded of events in the Kennedy assassination. Was that your intent?

No. In France, they thought of Ben Barka where so many witnesses died and disappeared. For instance, a reporter who had taken pictures for *Paris Match* in front of the police station committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Later, it was revealed that the revolver had been held in his right hand but that the photographer was left-handed. The Ben Barka affair was very much in mind while doing this film, but not the Kennedy events.

Did the Ben Barka parallel influence your decision to make the film in Algeria?

Not exactly. In Europe we make films by co-production. Two companies from different countries produce pictures jointly. We made this picture with Algeria because no one in Europe would co-operate. Not the Italians, not the Yugoslavians. I went to Yugoslavia personally – they said it was "too political."

Too specifically political or too generally political?

Both I think. I showed the director of the Yugoslavian cinema the script and he said, "No, we cannot do this." The Italians and the French had the same attitude. The Algerians finally said, "Come film the movie here." Most of it was finally shot there except for a few interior scenes done in Paris. They didn't provide much money but they helped with extras and in giving us locations. It may seem strange that a semi-police state like Algeria would allow us to make such a film. Perhaps it was partly luck. They didn't know the film would be so good or so popular. They wanted to have good rapport with the French intellectuals. They want to show they are the most advanced Arab nation in the Mediterranean. I want to make it very clear, however, that if they had not taken part in the production, *Z* probably would not have been made.

Had the film been less political, they might not have been so interested.

Well, it was an excellent way for them to look more liberal than they are, by attacking a nation so badly governed as Greece. If I had to choose between the Greek government and the Algerian government, I have no doubt I would choose the Algerian because the Greek government is just impossible to live under.

What effect do you think Z will have in America? The Black Panthers had a print months ago and had special screenings, but that was something unusual. How do you expect the average American to react?

I think that it is extremely important that as many people as possible see this film to see how present conditions came about. It's important for reference purposes. Someone speaking about Greece can be challenged on specific grounds.

Would there be any specific things that would make you feel the film was a success? Perhaps the fall of the junta or success at the box-office?

I have no financial interest in the film. I was paid a fixed salary so I'm not much interested in the financial success of the film. The most important thing is that it have a large audience because of the political possibilities. In Paris, people left notes at the door saying that they had been to Greece and loved the land and its people very much but that they would not return until the present regime fell. They transformed some of their outrage into a political act against the junta.

If political results are so important to you, why have you placed so much emphasis on the mechanics of the crime and less on the motivations? You are also vague about the role of the palace and the CIA.

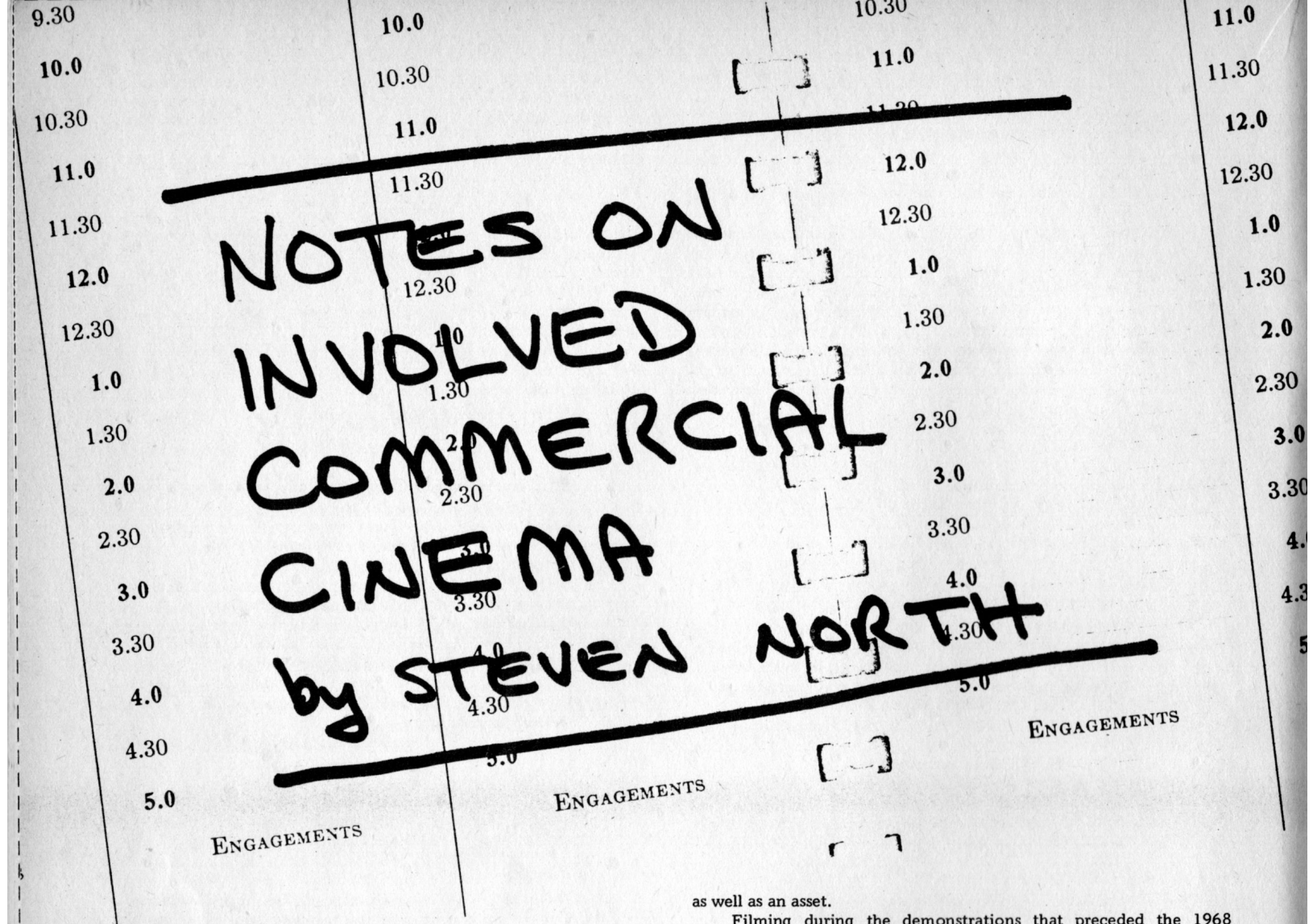
Are you sure the palace ordered the murder? Is there any proof? Are you sure the CIA was involved? Is there any proof?

We have proof about certain military men and their groups and the kinds of connections they have.

Greece has always had these paramilitary groups and police cadres, especially since the war. Queen Fredericka has sponsored many of them. The story of Lambrakis offered many possible approaches. By sticking absolutely to what was proved at the trial, we have made it all but impossible for people to say, "How do you know? That isn't true.That's a rumour." What we do say about the palace and the CIA is the kind of thing that came out at the trial. For instance, Theodorakis said that we should not attempt to find the murderers in two poor workers of Thessaloniki but go to the palace, particularly to the Queen Mother.

Your first film had no significant political content, but you obviously have very strong political feelings and are quite clear on how you want to develop political points. Are you a man of so many parts that we can expect more films of both types?

I want to explain about that. *The Sleeping Car Murders* was my first film. A first film is extremely difficult. I had to have a subject that was not too easy. The New Wave directors did other kinds of things as their first films. My situation was different. I was a stranger. I did not have a personal fortune. *The Sleeping Car Murders* was a solid film that could open doors to the future. In the past three or four years I have been working on *Z*. Since then there has been the uprising in France in 1968 and there's been the growing feeling about the war in Vietnam. The general public has become much more political. The world has become much more open-minded. I think cinema has to follow this trend. More and more of our films will be political. I will make more political films. There's no doubt I have a penchant for this kind of film – for films with real subjects. ■



NOTES ON INVOLVED COMMERCIAL CINEMA

by STEVEN NORTH

When MGM is half car-park, half memory, when the banks have swallowed Fox, when Hollywood has something to do with branches and berries, perhaps pictures involved with society instead of sugar will be made without the con and legerdemain necessary to get them off the ground today. Or perhaps when that day comes it will no longer be necessary to make them.

When *Medium Cool* started I was officially given the title of Associate Producer. The title included everything from conceptualizing and casting to truck driving and making coffee. Though my functions were much closer to those of an Assistant Director, Wexler could not assign this job to anyone not in the Directors' Guild of America. The D.G.A. is a closed shop open only to the sons of prominent directors and to a few token applicants. There are over two hundred applications received and a maximum of ten apprentices accepted each year. Requirements now include a university degree. If one is accepted, it is to a two year programme as tea boy before being allowed to function as an assistant. (By not allowing people to work, the D.G.A. violates the Taft-Hartley act, a law which clearly states that a man must be allowed to work if he is given a job – however the National Labour Relations Board, which deals with these matters, works hand in hand with the D.G.A. and the individual has no hope of fair treatment.)

In *Medium Cool* our tightly-knit unit of filmmakers did not indulge themselves in heavy union rules where everything is departmentalised – a grip cannot touch an electric wire, an electrician may not pick up a prop – everybody worked together. Ideas were shared and, though one hundred per cent of the credit must go to Haskell Wexler, Director, writer and cinematographer, he made everyone feel a part of the creative energy that made the film. Wexler is the most daring filmmaker to come along in America in the last decade and he signals what hopefully is to come on the American scene. He has delved into an area that has been totally unexplored – that of mixing documentary events and a dramatic story. One often overshadows the other, as events in America today tend to be much more dramatic than anything that could possibly be staged. This can be a drawback as well as an asset.

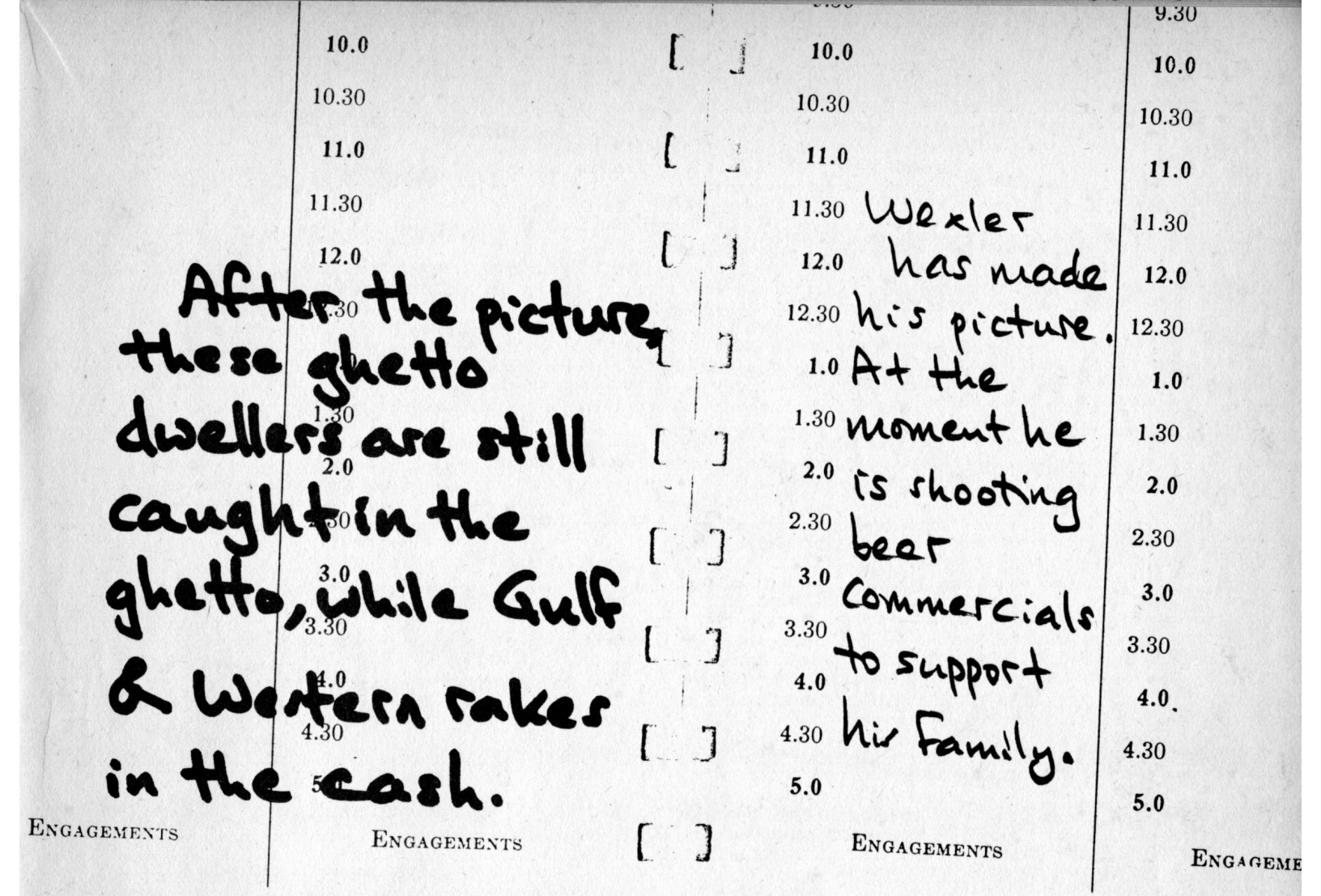
Filming during the demonstrations that preceded the 1968 Democratic Convention, in Resurrection City and at Bobby Kennedy's funeral, was far more interesting than the telling of a fragile story of an Appalachian woman and her son. The heights reached by the people who left their homes all over America, going to Washington to camp in three feet of mud – those who risked their lives against the pig-police in front of the Conrad Hilton – Jesse Jackson, with his black fist raised high in the air in defiance of all that the white establishment holds dear, tell the entire story of a people that have endured three hundred years of grief.

Wexler presents a comment on the evident impossibility of non-involvement in America, insisting on the lie or the inadmissable luxury of his hero's "Christ, I love to shoot film". A woman from the Appalachian ghetto is kept from her lost son by a street war waged over the fact and causes of her own crises: a cameraman insists on his objectivity only to find he has been unwittingly involved in the conflict with every foot of film he has shot – a filmmaker plies his trade with both eyes open.

Medium Cool shows us that we're in the battle whether we know it or not. From the opening logo the battle lines are drawn: PARAMOUNT PICTURES (a division, or did it say subsidiary, of Gulf and Western Corp). Through a scenario where boy would meet girl were it not for those tanks and troops in the way. And a final thanks to the National Guard. Perhaps Wexler's film is the best formula for cinema engagé: write a simple love story, and try to shoot it on location. If the streets let the guy get the girl, maybe there's not too much to be angry about.

Medium Cool, which takes the side of the poor and the ghetto dwellers and which was made by one who cares deeply, starts out with the logo ("A Paramount Production – A Gulf & Western Company"). After the picture, these ghetto dwellers are still caught in the ghetto, while Gulf & Western rakes in the cash. The people who run the system, that maintain the ghetto, are those who will eventually profit from the film. The money the picture makes helps keep the people it defends right where they are. A little more famous perhaps, but just as poor.

The artist or the creative producer who is allowed to make his


After the picture, these ghetto dwellers are still caught in the ghetto, while Gulf & Western rakes in the cash.
Wexler has made his picture. At the moment he is shooting beer commercials to support his family.
ENGAGEMENTS
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picture, must bite the hand that feeds him. He must never say "thank you" to those who support him, because they do not deserve his thanks. The studio is his enemy because it is very much a part of the system. After your picture is completed, the studio owners have the last say on what is to be shown. In the case of *Medium Cool*, Paramount/Gulf & Western did not want to release the picture and only after provocation scenes on the part of demonstrating students were added to the picture did they agree to have it released. Rumour has it that from somewhere in the U.S. Government a threat was handed down to Gulf & Western that their books might be examined if they released *Medium Cool* in its uncut version. Therefore, the picture had to be changed. All this would be impossible to prove but for a long time none of us knew if the picture would ever be seen.

To get the picture made Wexler had to enlist the aid of the Establishment. Paramount would only make a "negative pick-up deal" on *Medium Cool*. They would reimburse Wexler upon delivery of the negative assuming it was "up to the standard of Paramount products" – what they consider a first class picture. This worked for Wexler, it gave him total freedom while filming; it also gave him the job of raising the cash. To do this he went to a group of Chicago businessmen who had no clue about filmmaking. They were shown a script that resembled a Disney boy-and-pigeon story. Wexler knew he was not making an animal picture, he risked being in debt for over half a million dollars on delivery of the print to Paramount. Half way through shooting word got back to the studio that they were not getting what they expected. A publicity man/spy was sent to Chicago. On location he was called "The Spy" and finally became so intimidated that he turned tail and returned to Hollywood.

Medium Cool is a perfect example of how a studio can take no risk and end up with all the profits. Wexler, who deferred his writing, directing and cinematography salary, will not see a penny until Paramount has recouped its cost. This is usually 2.4 times the cost of the picture after publicity and overheads are tacked on. Wexler has made his picture. At the moment he is shooting beer commercials to support his family.

Even after you finally get your pictures made, it is almost impossible to have them put on the screen in the version you intended, unless you devote your life to making *Mary Poppins* or *True Grit*. Inevitably, one of the top studio men, to justify his enormous salary and time on earth, feels that he must change what you have spent a year of your life putting together. This may sound bitter and twisted, but you get this way when you have to deal with the ignorance of those who run the American film industry.

While we were getting the script of *Medium Cool* together, Claude Harz, the author of *Homer*, called Haskell Wexler to try to interest him in his script. Claude had been an actor who decided four years ago to turn writer and has devoted those last four years to his work. He is a deeply committed left-wing filmmaker, verging on an anarchist, and though Wexler was not reading scripts, I read it and felt that it was a film that had to be made.

Homer is a much gentler picture and for me was a natural progression from *Medium Cool*. The picture deals with rebellion of a different sort and on a much smaller scale, but I think on just as important a one. The rebellion is inside a boy's mind. It is the story of so many disenchanted young people today, not only in America but throughout the world, who find that they have no way of communicating with their parents, their society or their country. It deals with a boy who only understands and can only speak through his music. The old cliché of a generation gap – and I am sure publicity departments will call it a "generation gap picture" – is illustrated by the parents' lack of understanding of their boy's music, i.e. his soul. For the boy, music is a means of exchange, his way of relating. For his parents, status, position, money are the things that count. To the boy, *being* is enough, while to his parents, *having* means everything.

There were problems in financing *Homer* that equalled those of *Medium Cool*. Where Wexler had certain advantages in raising private cash – his Academy Award and long impressive record as a cinematographer behind him – all we had were several TV credits and an unreleased *Medium Cool* in the can. *Homer* was rejected by every studio in Hollywood, not because of the material but because no-one would take a chance on two untested producers. Finally, the script was read by Palomar's (*Killing of Sister George* and *For Love of Ivy*), Executive Producer in New York. He saw a chance to cash in on the youth explosion and, for fifty per cent of the profits of the picture, offered to put a deal together. This was highway robbery but there

was no choice in the matter. The script was sent to Cinema Center Films where it had previously been turned down twice; a deal was put together in less than a week. Palomar made no creative contribution; their percentage is insured in airtight contracts. Without them the picture would never have been made, and they reminded us of this fact throughout the shooting of the picture.

The *Homer* unit functioned much like the all-purpose *Medium Cool* crew. Director John Trent was open to new ideas and found new ways of using actual locations. No studio costs were tacked on the picture. *Homer*, budgeted at $1,200,000 in Hollywood, was produced for just over half a million dollars in Canada, and the cost was only that high because Cinema Center Films sent out a Production Manager/spy who changed deals made by co-producer Terry Dene and upped the cost at every opportunity, to justify his expense and existence.

There is a definite parallel between the new American cinema today and the vital periods in recent European cinema. In England, Anderson and Watkins, Godard, Resnais and Truffaut in France, Fellini and Antonioni, Bergman, Buñuel . . . one can go on and on. New content overshadows new techniques – technique is no longer enough. My generation wants to experience films that have something to do with now – with today's world. These controversial films may lose their meaning in years to come – this is yet to be seen. Today they hit their mark.

In 1969 two films were released by major studios in America – *Easy Rider* and *Medium Cool* – that dealt heavily with controversial issues. Both managed to make their points despite the footage added to assuage the other side. But both would have been better films aesthetically (and one might expect this to be the aim of the film industry) had they received the support of the companies destined to receive their profits. Instead, while Paramount poured millions into *Paint Your Wagon* and *Darling Lily*, the film that was to bring the highest critical success was left to get by on a wing and a prayer.

There are only a few competent American filmmakers today. Most are cop-outs who have sold themselves for the creature-comforts. Perhaps it is asking too much to devote oneself to honest expression through film but there is some hope when Wexlers and Hoppers are able to exist.

Medium Cool is a perfect example of how a studio can take no risk and end up with all the profits.

We have the monster by the tail and it will be forced by its own rules to support activities that attack it.

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In Hollywood, where the Establishment has been entrenched for thirty years, the industry, for the first time with the Wexler and Hopper films, can hope for a change. It must be remembered however that Wexler had won the Academy Award for cinematography for *Virginia Wolfe* and Hopper had spent many years knocking at the same gates that so many of us have tried to get through.

It is foolish to suggest that we are the first to wish to include social involvement in commercial cinema. From 1940, the beginning of the McCarthy era, to about 1960, the "black list" effectively stifled those who shared this desire. America was Red-scared and the film industry wanted everything to seem Yankee-Doodle-Dandy. Concerned artists either died painful deaths or survived under pseudonyms. There is no telling how much positive change could have been effected had the film industry, at that time, been courageous enough to manifest a conscience about social injustice in America.

Today the sons of the black-list are fighting their fathers' battles. Perhaps the list will be resurrected and we will all find ourselves out of work. In Reagan country this is to be expected and cannot affect the work we are now doing. Furthermore, American youth is awake and aware. It wants films that are relevant. We have the monster by the tail and it will be forced by its own rules to support activities that attack it. There is finally a dent in the armour and the outcome of all this is that the Hollywood moguls, the Zanucks, the Robert Evans's, the Aubreys, are looking for a formula to make "youth pictures", and trying to hook their greedy tentacles into the youth wave. These people have no concept of what has gone into making *Medium Cool* and *Easy Rider* and *Homer* – and they don't really care. They talk about "manufacturing" pictures – they might as well be soap pads.

To bring reasonable social comment to the screen today you may have to call your assistant director an associate producer, you may have to tell stories about boys and pigeons, cajole the bosses with haircuts and tickle them with boffo names. You will have to keep up the hustle and keep track of the con, watch where you wink, know that anyone around you might sell you out to get into bed with the system. You will have to go back to every door twice. One must only hope that now, when an *Easy Rider* can come in through the front door, Hopper and Wexler will still be able to hear that clamour out back. ■

HOLLYWOOD: A bibliography*

This bibliography is selective. It consists mainly of fiction about Hollywood and Los Angeles. On the whole Hollywood fiction is more revealing of the place than the ghosted memoirs that we get served up yearly.

JANE ALLEN, *I Lost My Girlish Laughter* (London: Faber & Faber, 1938)

HOLLIS ALPERT, *For Immediate Release* (London: W.H. Allen, 1965)

RICHARD BROOKS, *The Producer* (London: Heinemann, 1952)
A novel based on the life of the producer, Mark Hellinger.

JAMES M. CAIN, *Serenade* (Penguin)

RAYMOND CHANDLER, *The Little Sister, The Big Sleep, The Long Good-bye, Farewell My Lovely*, and other Philip Marlowe novels are set in and around Los Angeles and touch on Hollywood life from time to time (all in Penguin).
Raymond Chandler Speaking (eds Dorothy Gardiner and Kathrine Sorely Walker) (Four Square) Contains fascinating passages on Hollywood and Los Angeles.

JAMES HADLEY CHASE, *Eve* (Panther)
Joseph Losey's film changed the setting from Los Angeles to Venice.

PADDY CHAYEFSKY, *The Goddess* (a play) (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958)
Made into a film starring Kim Stanley, directed by John Cromwell.

BOSLEY CROWTHER, *The Lion's Share: The Story of an Entertainment Empire* (New York: Dutton, 1957)

BETTE DAVIS, *The Lonely Life* (London: Macdonald, 1963)
An excellent autobiography.

JOHN DOS PASSOS, *The Big Money* (third part of U.S.A.) (Penguin)
Most Likely to Succeed

WILLIAM FAULKNER, *The Golden Land* (1930), a story from *Concerning a Woman of Sin* (Consul)

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, *The Last Tycoon* (1941) (Penguin). The book of books about Hollywood.
Crazy Sunday (1932), story in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* (Penguin)
The Pat Hobby Stories (1939-41) (Penguin)

PHILIP FRENCH, *The Movie Moguls* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

EZRA GOODMAN, *The Fifty Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961)

STERLING HAYDEN, *Wanderer*
An actor-sailor's escape from Hollywood.

BEN HECHT, *A Child of the Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964). Some racy memoirs of the highest paid screenwriter in Hollywood.
I Hate Actors!
Concerning a Woman of Sin (Consul)

ALDOUS HUXLEY, *After Many a Summer* (1948) (Penguin)

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, *The World in the Evening* (1954) (Penguin)
The opening is set in Hollywood. There are references to Hollywood and Los Angeles throughout Isherwood's work.

LEWIS JACOBS, *The Rise of the American Film* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939)
A necessary work of reference, I suppose.

GERTRUDE JOBES, *Motion Picture Empire* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1965)

JIM KIRKWOOD, *There Must be a Pony* (1961) (Penguin)

GAVIN LAMBERT, *The Slide Area, Scenes of Hollywood Life* (1959) (Penguin). After Fitzgerald, the best writing on Hollywood.
Inside Daisy Clover (1963) (Penguin). A Hollywood fantasy.

RING LARDNER, *The Love Nest* (1925) in *Concerning a Woman of Sin* (Consul)

SPEED LAMKIN, *The Easter Egg Hunt* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954)

ANITA LOOS, *The Better Things in Life*, a serial in Cosmopolitan magazine.

ALISON LURIE, *The Nowhere City* (1965) (Pan)
Excellent novel of love in the smog of Los Angeles.

ROSS MACDONALD, *The Moving Target, The Chill, The Ivory Grin, The Zebra-Striped Hearse* (London: Collins)
Lew Archer stories set in and around Los Angeles. Similar to Raymond Chandler's books.

NORMAN MAILER, *The Deer Park* (1957) (Corgi)
An under-rated novel.

ALAN MARCUS, *Of Streets and Stars* (London: Spearman, 1963)
Little-known novel of great interest.

HORACE MCCOY, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1938) (Penguin)
I Should Have Stayed Home (1939) (Penguin)
Both tough-school stories set in Los Angeles and Hollywood.

EDGAR MORIN, *The Stars* (1960) (Calder)
Important mythical, psychological and social interpretation of the star system. Concept originated with André Malraux's essay, *Equisse d'une psychologie du Cinéma* (1946)

CLIFFORD ODETS, *The Big Knife* (1949) (Penguin)
Filmed in 1955 by Robert Aldrich. Special emphasis on the evils of the contract system.

JOHN O'HARA, *Hope of Heaven* (1939) (Panther)
The Big Laugh (1962) (Corgi)
Brothers (1939) story in *Concerning a Woman of Sin* (Consul)

TERRY RAMSAYE, *A Million and One Nights* (London: Cass, 1964)

HAROLD ROBBINS, *The Dream Merchants* (1961) (Four Square)
The Carpetbaggers (1963) (Four Square)
With these books Robbins has created a kind of sub-*genre* of fiction about Hollywood. Other books of this *genre* would include Richard Sale's *The Oscar* (London: Cassell, 1964)

LILLIAN ROSS, *Picture* (1953) (Penguin)
Required reading.

LEO C. ROSTEN, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1941)
The best non-fiction book ever written on Hollywood. Dated now in its facts, but apparently timeless in its descriptions of the motives behind Hollywood life.

WILLIAM SAROYAN, *Wagram*
The Bicycle Riders in Beverly Hills
The Brokenhearted Comedian and the Girl Who Took The Place of His Unfaithful Wife (1938) Story in *Concerning a Woman of Sin* (Consul)

BUDD SCHULBERG, *What Makes Sammy Run* (1961)
The Disenchanted (1951) (Penguin)
Some Faces in the Crowd (London: The Bodley Head, 1964)
The Original Viennese Schmalz
Third Nightcap with Historical Footnotes, story in *Esquire Treasury* (London: Heinemann, 1954)

MURRAY SCHUMACH, *The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor* (New York: Morrow, 1964)

IRWIN SHAW, *Two Weeks in Another Town* (1960) (Penguin)
The City was in Total Darkness (1941) story in *Concerning a Woman of Sin* (Consul)

UPTON SINCLAIR, *Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox* (1933)

BOB THOMAS, *King Cohn* (New York: Putnams, 1967)
Great anecdotes and lots of them.

MARGARET THORP, *America at the Movies* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1937)

CARL VAN VECHTEN, *Spider Boy: a scenario for a moving picture* (New York: Knopf, 1928)
Called a scenario, in fact a novel.

PETER VIERTEL, *White Hunter, Black Heart* (London: W.H.Allen, 1954)

JOSEF VON STERNBERG, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966)

ALEXANDER WALKER, *The Celluloid Sacrifice* (London: Michael Joseph, 1966). Published as *Sex in the Movies* (1968) (Penguin)

MAE WEST, *Goodness Had Nothing to do With it* (London: W.H. Allen)
An interesting autobiography of one of the few stars with a real point of view.

NATHANAEL WEST, *The Day of the Locust* (1939) (Penguin)

HARRY LEON WILSON, *Merton of the Movies* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1922)

THOMAS WISEMAN, *Czar* (London: Cassell, 1965)

MARTHA WOLFSTEIN and NATHAN LEITES, *Movies, a Psychological Study* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950)
A very interesting book in a field which has had less consideration (despite all the talk) than it deserves.

NORMAN ZIEROLD, *The Child Stars* (London: Macdonald, 1966)
Tells the stories of all the Baby Janes. ■

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* From *Hollywood, The Haunted House* by Paul Mayersberg, published (1969) by Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex. Publishers listed are necessarily those distributing that particular title in the British Isles.

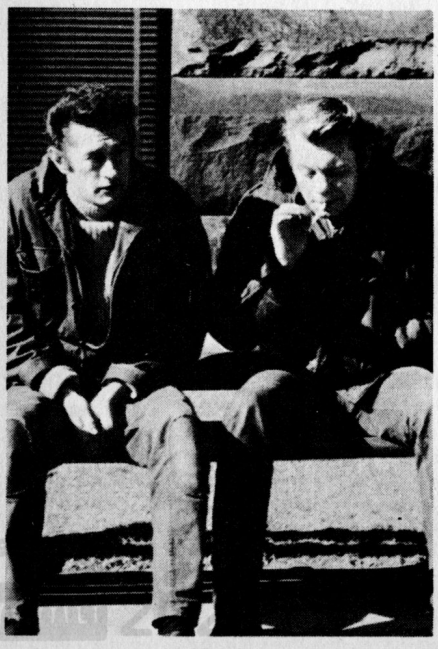
"Broggson will be in charge of the distribution of horror films. . ."

GOIN' DOWN THE ROAD

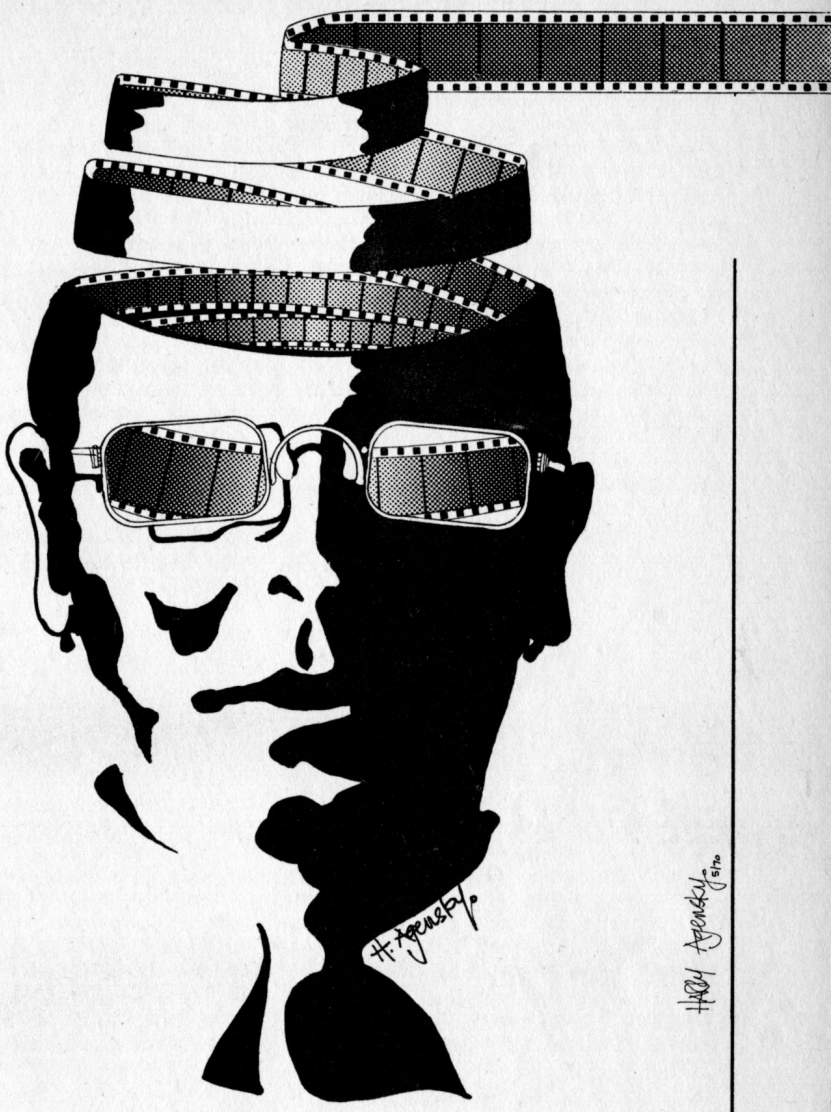
A Phoenix Film release, 1970. Producer and director: Donald Shebib. Screenplay: William Fruet and Donald Shebib. Camera: Douglas Leiterman. Cast: Doug McGrath, Paul Bradley, Jayne Eastwood, Nicole Morin.

It is difficult to predict what anyone will think of *Goin' Down The Road* five or ten years from now, but no history of Canadian cinema will be complete without a reference to it. For those familiar with Don Shebib's earlier work *The Duel, Revival,* and *Good Times, Bad Times, Goin' Down The Road* provides the distinct pleasure of seeing a "promising" young filmmaker fulfil his promise, of seeing themes and interests which appeared in germinal form in his short-subjects reach a mature and satisfying expression in this first feature film; and because Shebib's human sympathies are not the faddish interests of most directors and producers, *Goin' Down The Road* has a stamp of individuality on each of its scenes, and in many, the ring of rare truth.

Peter and Joey arrive in Toronto from the Maritimes, more hopeful than determined to meet the social and economic success they dream of, and which advertising encourages them to expect and demand of themselves and others. Shebib concentrates unsparingly but genially on the flaws of character in his two protagonists, thus avoiding the cliches of urban "alienation" when they are thwarted in their efforts to attain their goals. Throughout their problems – their first night's stay in a Salvation Army mission, the vicissitudes of unskilled employment, Joey's drift into a purely practical and drab marriage, Peter's equally pathetic, little stabs at happiness which only leave a wound in his memory – Shebib maintains a marvelous control, neither maudlin nor condescending in tone, but quite genuinely understanding. The performances of Doug McGrath and Jayne Eastwood are finely delineated with insight, that of Paul Bradley has such a verisimilitude, a life-likeness, that there isn't a single false note of



GOIN' DOWN THE ROAD



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"acting" in it.

The merits of *Goin' Down The Road* should be evident to anyone who can see and hear, and recognize how well certain aspects of Canadian life have been captured on the wing, as it were; its faults are more elusive. The film tends to reflect the irresponsible, "good-natured" characters in that it ducks issues, evades questions, and pulls its punches, having gained our interest in the problems it is presenting. Sometimes it gives us a setpiece of visual lyricism with music, and in such moments the film slips into both psychological falsification and cinematic triteness, though both Douglas Leiterman's color photography and Bruce Cockburn's music work well and inobtrusively through the rest of the film when they are integrated components of the whole. It is improbable that Joey and Peter would have a romp in the snow (at their age, and at that stage of their life in Toronto when despair has become a daily companion); it is unlikely that Joey and Betty would sit by in their suffocating, tenement quarters and tolerate Peter's playing Satie compositions on his record-player; Shebib has given us interesting, well-rounded characters, there's no need for such injections of out-of-character "soul".

Bonnie and Clyde treated violence with a startling, stylistic purposiveness, but as *Poor Cow* proved, when one treats kitchen-sink drama with an inappropriate style, one which serves no purpose at all, the result is likely to seem skittish and superficial, an unfortunate trivialization of the basic material, which provides only the illusion that a film has come to grips with a social problem when in fact it has simply been lightly and passingly embraced. *Goin' Down The Road* is not a film which falters, as *Poor Cow* often did, but at times it simply doesn't give us enough information (Joey and Betty's marriage is given short-shrift and in that sense the film is predisposed to their marital failure), it doesn't probe deeply enough. But even for a film to generate sufficient interest in its characters, that one cares and regrets not knowing more about them, is an indication of its strength to live on in the mind after the screen has darkened.

John Hofsess

lucia

1969. Black & white. Director: Humberto Solas. Producer: Raul Canosa. Screenplay: Julio Garcia Espinosa and Nelson Rodriguez. Photography: Jorge Herrera. Music: Leo Brouwer. Editor: Nelson Rodriguez. Cast: Raquel Revuelta, Eslinda Nunez, Adela Legra, Adolfo Llaurado, Ramon Brito.

Writing in the November 1969 *Positif*, Michel Ciment hailed the "great talent" of the young Cuban director Humberto Solas and described Solas' *Lucia*, awarded one of three *ex-aequo* Gold Medals at last year's Moscow festival, as the festival's only "real discovery." But for John Russell Taylor, in the Autumn 1969 *Sight and Sound*, *Lucia* was "a big, splashy often consciously virtuoso, piece of filmmaking . . . far from the masterpiece that many in Moscow rather hysterically felt it to be." A Moscow prizewinner is not, I suppose, all that alluring to Western distributors, and when *Lucia* finally surfaced in Paris late last winter, it was predictably restricted to a handful of art houses, mainly around the Latin Quarter. After three viewings, my initial conviction remains unchanged: Solas' first full-length feature is as important a debut as *Citizen Kane* and deserves the widest possible showing.

Episodic in form, *Lucia* touches on three periods in modern Cuban history. Each episode is linked by the heroine's name, Lucia, and the theme of revolution. The first episode takes place in 1895 under the Spanish occupation. Lucia (Raquel Revuelta) is a landowning family's daughter, pushing forty and resigned to virginity. The only man in her life is her younger brother, fighting in secret alongside the Cuban guerrillas. When a Spanish businessman, newly-arrived in Havana, starts courting her, she falls helplessly in love. But her lover has been using her to find out the location of the guerrillas' hideaway. Spanish troops storm the hideaway and her brother is killed. In a crowded Havana square, Lucia rushes at her ex-lover, now wearing a Spanish officer's uniform, and stabs him to death.

We move to 1923: Havana under the Machado dictatorship. Lucia (Eslinda Nunez), the daughter of a middle-bourgeois family, runs off with and marries a left-wing terrorist active in the revolution that topples Machado. But the new regime soon grows corrupt, and Lucia's husband takes up his machine-gun again. He is shot dead during an attempted political assassination.

In the third and final episode, Solas switches to comedy in a 1960s setting. Lucia (Adela Legra) is a newlywed farmworker whose jealous husband keeps her shut up in the house all day. He reckons however without the government's anti-illiteracy campaign. A good-looking young official arrives from Havana to teach Lucia to read and write, and after various explosions of jealousy from her husband, persuades her to leave home and go back to work in the fields. Eventually there is a tearful and passionate reconciliation.

About this last episode, not much need be said: it's entertaining, but it's in the wrong film, mere frivolity after the tragic intensity of the first two episodes. (Granted, the idea of good old male chauvinism being a drag on the economy must be less of a joke in Cuba than in France or North America.) The switch from artistic detachment to Castroite commitment is also jarring. Solas has a winning way of putting the message across, even slipping in a gentle dig at the Soviet comrades, but he has failed to solve the problem of how to mix propaganda and humor without creating an effect of cosiness. If he had continued in the tragic vein right to the end, perhaps setting his final episode at the time of Batista's downfall, Lucia would surely have been a total masterpiece.

As it is, we have two-thirds of one. The first episode is emotionally the more powerful, and I suppose it is only my thin Northern blood and a streak of 1930s cultism that makes me prefer the second. Raquel Revuelta, the first Lucia, is one of those operatic-style actresses, like Anna Magnani: magnificent but exhausting. Solas himself treats the episode in operatic fashion, and there is no reason to doubt him when he claims Visconti as one of his influences. John Russell Taylor's charge of conscious virtuosity is quite justified, but it is the virtuosity of a young director (Solas is 27) revelling in his own talent and seeking to discover where its boundaries lie. National pride is probably also involved, a desire to outdo the Americans in spectacular cinema. The sequence where machete-wielding Cubans, riding naked on horseback, battle with Spanish troops, communicates an animal fury that makes the terminal carnage of *The Wild Bunch* look like stock Hollywood heroics.

There is a fair amount of violence in the second episode – a shootout between soldiers and terrorists inside a Havana theatre, the ill-fated assassination – but the most striking sequence is a Felliniesque party that develops into an orgy while an orchestra plugs doggedly away at Poor Butterfly and Smiles. The overall tone of the episode is far cooler. Instead of stunning us, as in the first episode, with extremes of black and white, and occasional overexposure, Solas here favors greyish tones, shuns flashy camera angles, and casts as Lucia not a seething volcano à la Revuelta but the dreamy-faced Eslinda Nunez. It has been suggested that Solas was trying for a pastiche of the Hollywood 1930s look, and there is certainly no doubt that anyone who admires, for instance, early Huston, should be moved by this episode on the visual aspect alone. Indeed, there was a time, in his pre-fox-hunting days, when Huston himself could have done justice to the episode's themes: the betrayal of revolution and friendship, the destruction of a love relationship by the forces of a corrupt society.

To evoke Visconti, Fellini and Huston is not to imply that Solas is still seeking his own style. On the evidence of *Lucia*, he commands not one personal style but several, and the only question on this point is whether he will in future adopt one style exclusively or, like a cinematic Joyce, diversify. There is also the question of whether he can sustain a single narrative over the usual feature-length time – the episodes in *Lucia* run an average of 50 minutes each. Whatever happens, his artistic development should be fascinating to watch: already it is being suggested that in him Cuba has found its Eisenstein. We can only hope, in that case, that his luck holds out better than Eisenstein's did.

Geoffrey Minish

RED

An Onyx-Fournier production, 1970. Colour. Director: Gilles Carle. Cast: Daniel Pilon, Genevieve Deloir, Gratien Gelinas, Fernande Giroux.

The temper of Quebec popular culture is in full gallop under the half-closed English eyes of Montreal's mountained mansions, for there was *Red* – Gilles Carle's latest film, premiering ("selfishly" unsubtitled) at the Capitol Theatre, long the main street English-language house of the Famous Players chain. As an expensively backed (in Canadian terms) and very professionally realized production, *Red* has a good chance of being able to commercially buck the established norms of that new Quebec cinema which too often has had to seek out its recognition in the narrow world of the specialized cinema and Parisien film criticism.

Carle has outdistanced these criteria and their inherent distribution problems by achieving in *Red* a successful balance between left wing emotion and mercantile interests – thus the film falls nicely within that wider North American trend which is redefining film as that form of social indictment which can make huge money along its entertaining way. This more recent and most popular equation, that relevance mixed with entertainment breeds success, has its outstanding evidence in the heavy box offices of films like *Easy Rider*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Putney Swope* and *Medium Cool*. Carle has done well to adapt this equation to Quebec filmmaking.

Let it be known, however, that despite its international connotations, *Red* is quite definitely a film by and for Les Québecois. Its connection to Quebec society is hard and direct. Dressed as a sociologist, Carle has chosen to analyze Quebec's various life styles and the contradictory values these styles have nourished. The end result is a film which is not as much a pronouncement on revolution as a staking out of those areas of Quebec life where revolution might best occur. Kind of an exposing-of-the-bones process which leaves their actual picking to the audience.

The film's story line neatly follows the continual movement of Red, a half-breed from the Indian village of Caughnawaga near Montreal. In his search for a definitive social role, Red attempts to play out the part of a James Bond in a flashy yellow Camaro, driving to, driving away, leaving, or escaping — always running out the curse of a charted odyssey, which leads to a tragic nowhere, determined by his specifically Quebec situation.

We appreciate Red's situation, we understand his futility, but most importantly we like his personality's careless ways, and thus even despite our awareness that Red's end was in the film's beginning, his tragic and symbolic conclusion jars and angers, microcosm as it is of Carle's convictions as to the stability of Quebec's psychological and social climate. That Carle's convictions have such an emotional impression on his film's audience is testimony to his effective direction and to Daniel Pilon's (Red) talents as a film actor.

The entire issue and the symbolism are at times over-forced, but seldom at the sacrifice of Carle's wider and more valid intentions. Suffice to say that when the plot is at its loudest, the film is often at its weakest. (There are times when the plot is too quiet, leading to some apparently inexplicable developments which leave important questions unanswered: Red's relationship to his half sister, for example, although an essential dynamic in the story's development, takes on a mysterious and irksome quality after a while.)

It does strike one that though the methods may vary, the opinions of French Canadian filmmakers as to Quebec's cultural future remain constant. Even in this film, one of French Canada's most finely tuned and professionally teased to date, the same conclusion of cutural suicide for Quebec finds its drastic expression. Quebec must be in bad trouble.

Ian Ferguson

CRIMES OF THE FUTURE

An Emergent Films production, 1970. Colour, 65 min. Director, producer, script, photography and editing: David Cronenberg. Titles: Jon Lidolt. Production Assistant: Stephen Nosko. Cast: Ronald Mlodzik, Jon Lidolt, Tania Zolty, Jack Messinger, Paul Mulholland, William Haslam, Willem Poolman, Stephen Czernecki, Ray Woodley, Kaspars Dzeguze, Norman Snider, Iain Ewing, Brian Linehan, Leland Richard, Stephen Zeifman, William Wine, Bruce Martin, Don Owen, Udo Kasemets, Sheldon Cohen, George Gibbons, Rafe Macpherson, and Count Aus von Blicke.

Crimes has as its premise a world of the future where genetics have collapsed. All women die before puberty of Rouge's malady, brought on by cosmetics. Adrian Tripod, a protégé of Antoine Rouge, spends the film searching for a way to function in this world, finally joining a conspiracy of heterosexual pedophiles to impregnate a five year old brought to early puberty to avoid the disease.

One could make a bad "B" sci-fi out of such material, but Cronenberg has created a strange, cool, unsettling film with excellent colour photography and a philosophical underpinning expressed in both sound and image. Tripod narrates in a lost, wandering voice, reiterating his inability to comprehend events. Otherwise, the track is animal sounds, which fit in with the evolutionary events in the film: a man who has 'creative cancer' and is producing strange and new organs; Tripod handling web-toed and six-toed human feet only to have the more highly evolved die of Rouge's malady. Evolution has come to an impasse which the child (who may be Rouge reincarnated) alone can circumvent. She is the future's hope.

The voice-over technique creates the silent quality of a colour dream where characters move like animals in glass cages. Ronald Mlodzik (Tripod) has the only extended role and in the context of Cronenberg's disorienting, amoral world of one-dimensional characters he creates a solidly three-dimensional character. Both *Stereo* (Cronenberg's previous feature) and *Crimes* reflect the amorality of science, being the observation of an unknown in the pure, painstaking manner of an experimental psychologist. Situations develop in silence into tense (the opening violence), erotic (in the darkened planetarium—one of the most imaginative colour sequences ever shot in Canada), or even comic events, but moral concepts are alien even to Tripod, who walks away from two murders and commits one himself without reacting.

Crimes is disorienting for a number of reasons. It has occurred to Cronenberg that the world of the future may appear comic to us. So names, comments, and events do not always fit the deadly serious sci-fi genre where most people will arbitrarily place the film. The slow pacing, the frequent silence, and the few people against cold buildings seem to slow the action, although quite a lot actually happens. Those who want faster pace will probably want a clearer plot-line as well, but Cronenberg's scientific style challenges the filmgoer to put together the film's intent from data presented in the silent unfolding of horror. The film differs from sci-fi in placing us in an unknown world without precisely explaining the workings of that world. Tripod shares this uncertainty. One feels that he is always about to tear at the screen to escape and this is why the character works so well.

For that matter the whole film works well. This is a major Canadian feature film, planned with integrity and purpose, photographed and edited with skill.

Peter Brigg

HOSPITAL

An Osti production, 1970. Director, editor and producer: Frederick Wiseman. Camera: William Brayne.

Illness, mental or physical, is something all of us fear; it is preliminary to dying, and makes us acutely aware of living. Alan King hit on this nerve-end in *Warrendale*.

Fred Wiseman has just made the best North American documentary since *Warrendale*. He has also produced the most powerful revelation of the condition of the poor that this reviewer has seen. The film is called *Hospital*.

Wiseman and cameraman William Brayne spent the customary four to six weeks in an institution, this time a central Manhattan hospital on the edge of several ghettos. The patients are Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Whites, mostly poor. I expected a repeat of Wiseman's sardonic laceration of the progressive high-school (*Highschool*) or the cruel exposure of the entrails of the mental institution at Bridgewater (*Titicut Follies*). But instead I found that the hospital and its staff come off very well in this film. Many of them are both helpful and concerned for the welfare of patients.

The film has no music (the sounds of the hospital form the track) and is of an episodic quality, which gives the film a generally ironic tone, and a meaning.

What is quite striking about the film are the emotional undertones Wiseman captures. The actual operations, gunshot wounds, etc. seem secondary to the anxieties, fears and frustrations they arouse — in us as well as the patients. Perhaps its my own discomfort at the

thought of being hospitalized, for I found ready identification with many of those who came to the hospital, to give themselves up into a stranger's hands. This loss of defences, commonly termed bearing or composure, is more evident when many of the patients have difficulty speaking English. They are so helpless, having given up (on entering the hospital) even their power over their own bodies, in many cases the only power these people wield.

One episode in the film, a psychiatric interview with a Black homosexual, borders on being a comic routine, but the boy's schizophrenia, and his statement that he is not a human being but a freak, shame us out of finding humour in this too human a situation. In a telephone conversation, the psychiatrist tries to obtain welfare money for the boy. A welfare worker explains that he does not qualify because his mother can provide for him. When told that the mother initially threw the boy out, the welfare worker only reiterates the rules. In what is a highly dramatic, funny, sad conversation, we gain affirmation of the rule of the bureaucracy. The boy never does get welfare; the welfare worker hangs up.

Perhaps the most shocking episode in the film (some would think it the funniest), is the emergency admission into the hospital of a young student who has taken an impure dose of mescaline and is afraid he is going to die. After induced vomiting, the boy still fears his own death. He is taken into an anteroom by two policemen, to await the arrival of a psychiatrist. There he pukes seemingly endlessly and is so afraid that he asks the police to sing, dance, do anything to distract his attention from himself. His agonizing, frightened pleas are calls from the wilderness.

Ken Dancyger

GREAT Coups of HISTORY

A One Productions production, 1970. Black & white, 80 min. Director: Jack Darcus. Camera: Terry Hudson. Sound: John R. Bennest. Music: John Gray. Cast: Delphine Harvey, Janie Cassie, Ellis Pryce-Jones, Ted Sutton.

The structure of *Great Coups of History* – a Vancouver feature made by artist Jack Darcus – is fascinating in the originality of its concept. The film has as its basis a series of sequences of interview-style footage of an aging woman who recounts her experiences, techniques and philosophy – all based on many years of living off men she has 'picked up'. With this as nucleus, two additional paths are developed: this woman's adventures with her latest candidate, and the effect that this ambulant life from man to man has on her young daughter. While not entirely successful, the latent impact of the film lies in the generation of cross-commentary between these three levels.

Gentle sequences with her new male acquisition qualify and heighten the woman's monologues, for these incidents give a new dimension to her words and make tangible her life-style and emotion. Yet as she describes her past existence, a sense of archtypal absurdity hovers about her person and this in turn is captured under a changed perspective by the maladroit simplicity and ludicrous humour surrounding the man: an anthropology professor bearing a close resemblance to a jelly-fish. Conversely, the daughter is casually revealed, alone and obviously a product of this meandering life. She is shown apart from her mother, seeking human contact and warmth.

The film's crucial flaw is that these three planes – the mother's verbal tale, the new affair, and the maturing child – rarely intersect successfully. Relevant (and obviously necessary) personal relationships between the principal characters and interactions between biographical/fictional/dramatic levels are sparse and ineffective. As two separate tales, the mother's and the daughter's lives are equally valid and interesting. When presented simultaneously however, the vivid narration of the worldly and experienced woman quickly effaces her daughter's simple nature. Even probing into the young waif's amorous adventures becomes simply irrelevant and tedious. In fact, within the cluttering excess of the film lies a gem of a short, focusing on the mother and perhaps half as long.

With such a wealth of material and far-ranging possibilities in structure, the film is cheated by its lack of style. Undermined firstly by photography reminiscent of newsreel footage of an industrialists' dinner conference, the precision and control of material and pacing demonstrated in an opening pre-title cameo sequence completely vanish minutes later as the credits pass on the screen.

So, we will have to wait for his next feature to discover whether or not Jack Darcus can actually direct a film. In the meantime, while *Great Coups of History* is by no means great, certainly the electric lead role as played by Delphine Harvey makes this an interesting experiment worth observing.

Kirk Tougas

PUFFED RICE

by SUSAN RICE

I have it on good, dare I say unimpeachable, authority that Richard M. Nixon screened *Patton* TWICE, with emphasis on the opening scene, before delivering his unforgettable Cambodian speech. Who says movies don't influence people?

The best movie I have seen in the last month, aside from *L'Atalante*, is Claude Chabrol's *This Man Must Die*, a film that manages to take itself seriously and to kid the genre it represents all at the same time. The genre is the standard revenge thriller featuring the eye-for-an-eye motif: a little boy is run over by a hit-and-run driver and his father vows elaborate revenge. Chabrol and his co-scenarist Paul Gegauff mock the conventional and unbelievable coincidences that allow a film like this to get past the first reel – the million-to-one hunches that pay off, the chance meetings, the ironic reversals – while dramatizing and perfecting them with new twists and inspired detail. I do not feel that the premise of the film is a red herring and that Chabrol is manipulating it in order to covertly examine the manner and mores of the French upper middle class, still he enhances the mystery and elevates its effect by populating the screen with characters far more puzzling and settings more fascinating than the crime itself and potentially more compelling then its resolution. Whenever the action moves perilously toward pure psychological or social metaphor, Chabrol brings it up short and restores its conventional import and tension. It is a mark of his control and inventiveness that the film ends ambiguously without benefit of a freeze frame. Chabrol has been hovering about the front rank of French directorship. *This Man Must Die* securely establishes him in that league.

Two Mules for Sister Sara is a blessedly old-fashioned movie with Clint Eastwood carrying on the wooden tradition of the man with no name and Shirley MacLaine as an ersatz ersatz nun (an actress playing a hooker playing a nun). The premise of the film transcends Harry Cohn's wildest dreams – a marriage of convenience between the Western hero and a religious icon. The plot is Hollywood Western baroque – silent stranger finds nun, silent stranger loses nun, nun loses nun. Against a backdrop of the French-Mexican conflict. Combined with a gold caper. The film is filled with comic clichés – the virile mercenary suppressing his lust for the comely nun; the comely nun swigging whiskey on the sly; the hostile Yaqui Indians transfixed by the crucifix (lighters, anyone?) – which become something more than cinematic bromides because of Don Siegel's unself-conscious, straightforward and economical direction. *Two Mules for Sister Sara*, despite its uninviting title, is an opportunity to relive the pre-auteur experiences you used to have at Western movies.

Chisum, new from John Wayne, offers a similar occasion for simple-minded entertainment and action though it lacks the wit and richness of *Two Mules for Sister Sara*. Still, the Duke makes up for lack of conscious humor with an abundance of paunch and his own awareness of himself as prehumous myth. Andrew V. McLaglen is a competent director and I have harboured a special fondness for him ever since I saw *Shenandoah* a few years back. *Chisum* is the Howard Johnsons of Westerns – there are no surprises and you can pretend you are anywhere, but when you feel like a prolefeast of unchallenging familiarity and no bitter aftertaste, there is nothing quite like it.

The fact that somebody named Shel Silverstein wrote the authentic century-old Australian folk songs that comprise about 85 per cent of the track of *Ned Kelly* should be some kind of tip-off. Now, I would not have known that this 19th Century Western (Eastern?) by Tony Richardson was set in Australia unless I had the program notes, which I trust you will not if you are so unfortunate as to find yourself at this film because you want to see Mick Jagger in his first feature since *Sympathy for the Devil*. While I may not have any better understanding of the Australian character after having seen this film, I have come away with the true meaning of the word "epicene" having watched Mick Jagger. And I don't mean that pejoratively. I find the notion of a sensuous hermaphrodite fascinating, and in this sense a Mick Jagger vehicle offers something for everyone. Whether or not Jagger can act remains a moot question. He does have charisma, but nobody has enough to support the ponderous burden that Richardson offers up with this Down Under *Bonnie and Clyde*. The big scene is supposed to have something to do with Ned and his merrie brothers

outfoxing corrupt law enforcers by appearing for the showdown in armour from head to waist. (A curiously incomplete strategy.) In any case, all of the good bad guys are knocked off before such a confrontation can take place, except Ned who takes on the entire police force in his armour and this scene has all the impact of an out-take from the Tin Man's aria in *The Wizard of Oz*. Do we have enough evidence to say that Richardson is finished?

It is strange. If you see enough bad movies on a single theme, one of them has to look good by the perverse virtue of "honesty". (Which we will call "Renata Adler's Law" to keep her memory alive.) I really don't know how to go about defining an "honest movie", but I know a phony one when I see it and there has been a whole raft of them on the theme of student revolution and teeny rebellion starting with *The Activist* and moving on down through *Getting Straight*, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* and *Zabriskie Point*. There are several aspects of *The Revolutionary* that elevate it by mere contrast. It is low key. It is not full of TV commercial pyrotechnics. The people in it are not uniformly glamorous, not even Jon Voight who plays the lead. Finally, it does not conclude with a head-busting orgy photographed in dying and injured color and accompanied by overhead shots and a chorus of clubs meeting flesh. *The Revolutionary* is an intelligent, talky movie, a sort of *La Guerre Est Finie, Jr.* that reiterates the point that at least 70 per cent of radical activity is discussing strategy or the rhetoric to be used in discussing strategy. There are no re-plays of Kennedy assassinations. No flash photographs of Nixon laughing. In fact, *The Revolutionary* has the Kafka-esque quality of disembodied persecution and paranoia, of being set in no particular country at no particular time with no particular ruling class. Which leads you to think it is ambitious, which it is, and pretentious, which it is not. What *is* wrong with it is that it is so low key that it had the people at the theatre looking at their watches and the rest of the audience to find out whether or not they should still be interested. It's the kind of film that keeps promising and promising and then delivers only the shock of abrupt conclusion. *The Revolutionary* is directed by a young man, Paul Williams (*Out of It*), who has obviously seen a lot of Godard but not enough to drop a narrative line. . .for which I am grateful. *The Revolutionary* is a rather scholarly film that will probably reach a small community of Moderate New Leftists who will congratulate themselves for relearning what they already knew.

Lots of movies show death but very few of them investigate it thoughtfully. That is probably because serious death in a movie is closely identified with death at the box office. Even rarer is a study of youth's reaction to unglorified death – the only films that spring to my mind are *All the Way Home* and *Zita* – and this is the subject of *I Never Sang for My Father*, an earnest, theatrical adaptation of the play by Robert Anderson. *INSFMF* is as much about the middle years as it is about old age, and about the alternating affection and irritation that the young feel for the helpless rigidity of the old, and that children have for their own parents in particular. I find it odd that so universal a theme – the death of a mother or father – should be so badly neglected in contemporary movies. Though this film will never be proclaimed a cinematic masterpiece (as film *per se* it is unexciting and uninspired), it is magnificently performed by Melvyn Douglas, Gene Hackman, Estelle Parsons and Dorothy Stickney and it is movingly written. I expect it will have very limited play so I hope you will look for it.

Diary of a Mad Housewife is a solidly entertaining exercise in New York uppity middle class self-punishment that could have been much more than it is. The script by Eleanor Perry is chic and perceptive. It is vitiated somewhat by Frank Perry's overbroad direction of Richard Benjamin's shrill, inhuman portrayal of the husband. You can't have much sympathy or pity for any woman stupid or unintuitive enough to marry such a prick, and then to top things off by having an affair with another, metaphorically speaking. Carrie Snodgress does a fine job in the leading role, but the lady she portrays picks such conventional, familiar alternatives to her suffering. Her agony – waxing floors, fixing food, giving parties, marshalling the help – is the source of the best schtik in the film and it is depicted in such a way that you can really accept the martyrdom of housewifery. However, her escape routes are so poorly chosen, her resistance so meager and unimaginative that you begin to regard Fifth Avenue imprisonment as a just reward rather than a punishment. A true masochist deserves no less than the worst. Which is why the comedy in the picture works while the psychology fails.

The new movie version of *Julius Caesar* is beyond belief. Charlton Heston, John Gielgud, Robert Vaughn and Richard Chamberlain conspire in more ways than one to murder Caesar. Richard Johnson is bearable as Cassius but Jason Robards makes up for him and deals the true death blow as Brutus. It's too awful to be funny. The kind of film that makes you sit up and take NoDoz.

OVER- -looked & UNDER- -RATED

The purpose of this column is to recommend films which are of more interest than their critical reception would indicate. Suggestions from TAKE ONE contributors and readers are welcomed. The films are not listed in any particular order.

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MARLOWE. Dir. Paul Bogart. Stirling Silliphant's script manages to remain faithful to the spirit of Raymond Chandler's "The Little Sister" while updating the original by 20 years. James Garner's Marlowe won't make you forget Bogie in *The Big Sleep*, but it does show how good he can be, given decent material. (If you want to see him at his worst catch Jerry Paris's *How Sweet It Is* – my nomination for the worst movie of all time.)

JE T'AIME, JE T'AIME. Dir. Alain Resnais. When a major film by one of the great filmmakers of his generation is ignored by the critics and the public, one wonders what the hell this great film interest we're now supposedly witnessing is all about.

THE KREMLIN LETTER. Dir. John Huston. A disappointment after *Reflections in a Golden Eye* and *Sinful Davey*, this may be Huston's sloppiest film yet. Interesting in that in an era of nasty films this manages to be one of the nastiest.

THE STRAWBERRY STATEMENT. Dir. Stewart Hagmann. For three-quarters of its length this is one of the dumbest movies of all time. But the last 15 minutes or so makes up for it.

FUTZ. Dir. Tom O'Horgan. The transition to the screen brings some of the weaknesses of Rochelle Owens' play to the fore and Tom O'Horgan's direction displays a lot of the excesses of a directorial debut; but as the ads will no doubt say, there's never been a film quite like *Futz* before.

BLOODY MAMA. Dir. Roger Corman. Filmed and edited in a remarkably unsensational manner, the objective cold brutality of this film is almost unbearable. With *Wild in the Streets*, *The Legend of Lylah Claire* and *Bloody Mama*, Robert Thom appears to be one of the more interesting new writers around (he's now begun to direct – unfortunately not in time to save *Wild in the Streets*) and both the Corman and the AIP stock companies get better all the time: especially Bruce Dern, Don Stroud and Diane Varsi.

Joe Medjuck

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GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

There are three notable films that have gotten short shrift from the critics that are really worth seeing. *Leo the Last* is one of the most visually and aurally inventive films I have seen of late, and it is an incisive and unusual treatment of aristocratic guilt and voyeuristic assimilation of lower-class hedonism—the combination of which is utter futility. Director John Boorman fulfills the promise he suggested with *Point Blank* and later betrayed with *Hell in the Pacific*.

With *Mississippi Mermaid*, François Truffaut sets himself the very difficult task of developing a significant statement about love within the conventional framework of movie clichés. I think viewers of this film may be put off by Truffaut's seemingly arbitrary manipulation of events, environment and episodes, but his capricious ordering of the action and outrageous development of characters is also a way of reminding us, through the conventions of the medium, that film gives us a universe to look at, not to live in and that there are subtle degrees in the suspension of disbelief.

The advertising campaign for *The Landlord*—"Watch the Landlord Get His!"—was rapidly taken up by most of the critics whose reviews are better suited to the ads (which were tasteless and misleading) than to the film which is beautifully directed by former editor Hal Ashby, and magnificently played by Beau Bridges, Lee Grant, Diana Sands and, believe it or not, Pearl Bailey. It's the only film I've seen that has to do with blacks that isn't patronizing, pretentious or just plain embarrassing. The theatre I saw it at was partially filled with a mixed audience and they were all laughing and could look at each other when the movie was over. And they applauded the film—which should tell you more than a lot of adjectives from me.

Susan Rice

CANNES LETTER

GEOFFREY MINISH

It is opening day of the 23rd Cannes Film Festival and I sit in a chilly wind on the Croisette reading the International *Herald Tribune*: NIXON ORDERS GIs INTO CAMBODIA. Three U.S. warships are anchored in the bay, and small groups of American servicemen keep striding past, loutish and lost. A couple of Warner Brothers girl hippies come up and present me with a headband and lapel badge plugging *Woodstock*. Later, at a press cocktail party, an Egyptian girl assures me that the Israelis are out to get Jean-Luc Godard for his film on the Palestine commandos. She's a nice girl, so I don't argue. We agree, anyway, that the festival's opening film, *Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel*, was a big mistake. We chuckle over the announcement by writer Miguel-Angel Asturias, the festival jury chairman, that this year the Grand Prix will be awarded to the film most conspicuous for its humanitarian qualities: "He thinks it's the Nobel Prize."

I go to bed early that night, suspecting from the omens that it's not going to be much of a festival and I'm not going to get much of a suntan. I was right on both counts.

With more than 400 films being screened over the festival's two weeks, I decided as a working basis to concentrate on films from Canada and Eastern Europe, plus, for relaxation, the occasional trade show skin flick, the kind that never gets a public showing in France.

The Directors Fortnight, the free-seat showcase for films ostensibly avant-garde, uncommercial and/or *contestaire*, kicked off on a Sunday morning with Joyce Wieland's anti-travelogue, *Reason Over Passion*. I counted 46 walkouts — 47 including my own.

I suppose the most eagerly awaited film of the Fortnight was Jean-Luc Godard's *Vent d'Est* (or *West Wind*, if you read *Time*), shot last year in Italy with the collaboration of Daniel Cohn-Bendit. With its home-movie technique and soundtrack hectoring of the audience (everyone in the world is an imbecile except Jean-Luc Godard and maybe Mao Tse-tung), the film is further evidence of Godard's slow suicide as an artist. "*Fais ton autocritique, Godard!*," someone shouted behind me. One of the less attractive features of the film is its advocacy of political terrorism, objectors being dismissed as "bourgeois humanitarians."

"Godard," a French critic said to me afterward, "is a fascist who doesn't know it."

Another writeoff was Ruy Guerra's *Sweet Hunters*, which had received favorable advance publicity from people who should know better. Ricardo Aronovich's icy-blue photography is admittedly quite something, but the film itself is pseudo-Tennessee Williams, complete with a smack of necrophilia to keep the sophisticates happy. The cast includes three of the lamest performers in the modern cinema — Sterling Hayden, Susan Strasberg and Stuart Whitman — as well as young Andrew Hayden, who disproves the theory that children are natural actors. Unless, like Miss Strasberg, he has been taking lessons from his father.

On the porno circuit, I only managed to see two-and-a-half films, the half being *The Minx*, whose heroine looked a little too masculine for my simple tastes. Her face, that is. Director A.P. Stootsberry, whose *The Secret Lives of Romeo and Juliet was the word-of-mouth* hit of the 1969 festival, was represented this year by *The Notorious Cleopatra*. At the screening I attended it was standing room only, with whirring cameras in the audience recording the film's gamier sequences, which tells you all you need to know about the sex lives of film critics. Stootsberry's earlier film had given him the reputation of a poet of eroticism, but *Cleopatra* is just a stag movie in *Playboy* color, made somehow even dirtier by the terrible acting. Anyone who claims that pornography is anti-sex can use this movie as evidence. Far better was Denmark's *The Song of the Red Ruby*, based on Agnar Mykle's novel and directed by

INVESTIGATION OF A PRIVATE CITIZEN

Anneliese Meineche. Artless in every sense of the word, but worth seeing just for the girl nibbling an apple after conferring upon the hero his first-ever blow job.

In the official festival context, the Critics Week, devoted to directors' first or second films, screened two films by Canadians, Michel Brault's *Eloge du Chiak* and Pierre Perrault's *Les Voitures d'Eau*. Not bad, considering that neither Brault nor Perrault are exactly newcomers. They presumably got in through the influence of Critics Week chairman Louis Marcorelles, who has a thing about Canadian movies. Brault's film I arrived late for, and what I did see, didn't much like, but Perrault's film struck me as even better than *Le Règne du Jour*, although once again I experienced admiration more than enjoyment.

Two other films I saw in Critics Week were the British *Kes*, directed by Ken Loach, and the Franco-Algerian *Remparts d'Argile*, directed by a 28-year-old Parisian, Jean-Louis Bertucelli. *Kes* (for Kestrel) has developed a *film maudit* reputation since British distributors initially wouldn't touch it, but it is in fact nothing more than an averagely competent piece of work, the heartwarming story of a boy and his hawk. Like most films nowadays, it is about half-an-hour too long.

Remparts d'Argile is also a fiction film, but treated in documentary style. It deals with a dual conflict: between a Tunisian village community and the authorities on one hand, and between the villagers and a girl, Rima (played by Algerian actress Leila Schenna, the only professional in the cast), on the other. Rima lives among the villagers virtually as a slave. Finally she has enough and goes out into the desert to die.

A synopsis, however, hardly conveys what *Remparts d'Argile* is about, because this is not a film where a great deal happens in terms of physical action. Like Perrault, Bertucelli is a cool, tactful director, able to communicate, via an apparent objectivity, his intense concern for the people he is filming. But unlike Perrault, this stops short of actually identifying with them. For me, and for others too, Bertucelli was the discovery of the festival. Some of the credit for this must go to his cameraman, Andreas Winding, whose color photography has an extraordinary purity, due, I suppose, to the desert light.

In the competition section, I saw the following films, listed in order of screening. Bracketed English titles are provisional:

Indagine su un Cittadino al di Sopra di Ogni Sospetto (Investigation of a Private Citizen). Italian. Director: Elio Petri. Rome's top homicide detective (Gian Maria Volonte) murders his mistress (Florinda Bolkan) as an ego-boosting demonstration that his position in society places him above suspicion. The more he tries to incriminate himself, the more his theory is confirmed. This film won the Special Jury Prize and I should like to have seen Volonte get the Best Actor award as well: his portrayal of the detective, one of nature's fascists, is simultaneously frightening and hilarious.

El Ard (The Land). Egyptian. Director: Youssef Chahine. Egyptian peasants fighting to keep their land, under the regime of bold bad King Farouk. This film was originally refused by the festival selection board, but the Cäiro press kicked up a fuss, alleging "Zionist" skullduggery, and the Quai d'Orsay, so I am told, put the pressure on and got the film accepted. Despite a certain staginess in direction, it is worth seeing, and the ending is shattering.

Malatesta. West German. Director: Peter Lilienthal. An episode from the British exile of the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta. Considering that it incorporates the 1911 Siege of Sydney Street, this is an extremely quiet, even dreamy, film, with the atmosphere of working-class Edwardian London more convincing than in any British film I recall. Malatesta is played by, of all people, Eddie Constantine, with the same marvelous haunted facial expression as in *Alphaville*.

At the press conference we were treated to Constantine making his *autocritique*. He accepted the Malatesta role, he said, because he hadn't made a film for two years – *Alphaville* had killed his career stone-dead. "Besides," he added, "I was tired of being a whore." He had long admired Malatesta and was himself of peaceful disposition, not at all like the hardboiled heroes of the French gangster quickies that had established his reputation. This film, he said, was a plea for nonviolence, which was what Malatesta had advocated. It was a touching speech, if you didn't know that Constantine made half-a-dozen movies after *Alphaville* and that the historical Malatesta was against terrorism, not violence. ("To the violence that oppresses we will oppose the violence that liberates . . .") Nice try, Eddie.

Magasiskola (The Falcons). Hungarian. Director: Istvan Gaal. Hungarian photography is always stunning, even if the film is weak, and this is a good one. A young ornithologist comes to stay at a farm run by a falconer, Lilik, who uses the birds to hunt down vermin. Lilik, heartily disliked by the people in the neighborhood, runs the farm on semi-military lines. His authoritarian fanaticism eventually proves too much for the ornithologist, who leaves one day without saying goodbye.

Gaal firmly rejected a suggestion at the press conference that his film was meant to be symbolical. All he had wanted to do, he said, was make a movie about falcons. Shared the Jury Prize with *The Strawberry Statement*.

Dramma della Gelosia (Jealousy Drama). Italian. Director: Ettore Scola. Like the underrated *La Ragazza con la Pistola*, an extremely funny specimen of Italian self-mockery. Communist worker (Marcello Mastroianni), married to a wife who looks like his mother, starts an affair with a flower seller (Monica Vitti). But Vitti falls in love with a pizza chef, and Marx can't mend a broken heart. It ends with Vitti stabbed to death and Mastroianni out of his mind. The film, I repeat, is a comedy, and as a comedy team, Vitti and Mastroianni are in the Tracy-Hepburn class. Mastroianni won the Best Actor award for this one.

Hoa-Binh. French. Director: Raoul Coutard. The cameraman's directorial debut, this shows us the Vietnam war through the eyes of a small boy whose father is with the Viet Cong and whose mother dies of cancer. Coutard, who knows Indo-China well, has been accused of playing Washington's game here by putting the Viet Cong and the Americans on the same moral level, but the film is after all supposed to be a victim's-eye view of the war. A disappointment, nevertheless, partly because of the photography, which is too beautiful for the subject matter. Won the prize for the best first film.

Krajobraz Po Bitwie (The Landscape After the Battle). Polish. Director: Andrezj Wajda. Young Polish poet (Daniel Olbrychski), freed from a Second World War concentration camp, is transferred to a West German transit camp, where he meets a Jewish girl (Stanislawa Celinska), who has survived wartime Poland by passing as a Catholic. They fall in love, but she wants to live in exile in Paris and he wants to go back to Poland, where his language is. The question is settled for them by a trigger-happy American sentry, who shoots the girl dead.

The film is based on short stories by the Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski, himself a concentration camp survivor. With limited space and on only one viewing, I cannot hope to describe its visual richness and moral complexity. The bitterness pervading the film – "You don't know what hunger is," the poet tells the girl, "until you've looked at another human being in terms of meat" – clearly upset some critics, but that's their problem. I gave it the Grand Prix.

Luis Buñuel, who owes his international rediscovery to the 1951 festival (and so much for people who say: "What use are film festivals? "), turned up in the out-of-competition section with *Tristana*. Toledo in 1929: Catherine Deneuve has her right leg amputated and later bares her breasts to a worshipping deaf-mute but not, alas, to us. Still, it's a fine moment – Buñuel has forgotten more about sexual passion than most men will ever know – and if the rest of the film were on the same level, it would be a masterpiece, instead of a deadly bore. It's time Buñuel did what he's always threatening to do: retire.

LETTER FROM N.Y.C.

BOB COWAN

Joyce Wieland's new 90-minute film is a cross-country east-west voyage through Canada. On one level it is a tribute to the vastness and grandeur (or emptyness, depending on your point of view), of the physical face of rural Canada. It is a Canada without people, a Canada almost unspoiled and primeval; a fast-moving epic journey with the ever-present lettered phrase "La Raison avant La Passion" guiding us insistently frame by frame with occasional interruptions on this flowing journey – images of Trudeau appearing God-like, ghost-like and then disappearing altogether – as landscapes, roads, train tracks, pass us by. All possible variations of the letters of "Reason over Passion" pass by as well, affixed to the bottom of the image, accompanied by the insistent sound of an electronic beep.

These are the facts of the physical images we are witness to; there is also the sense of a nostalgic, old-fashioned patriotism (without violence). On another level it emerges as something quite different, almost frightening in aspect. The basic content of the film, after a period of time, becomes more abstract in form, less to do with Canada and more to do with the inner world of the filmmaker herself. It has the feeling of a journey through existence towards death, the electronic beep (heartbeat) building anxiety as it approaches termination, and yet the film never forces you to take part. It seems – as it rolls by – to be inviting you, nudging you gently to be part of

its completeness; it relaxes you, sets your mind in an hypnotic groove. You feel as if you are on a journey to the ends of the universe with someone guiding all the way. It also occurred to me that on still another level, the film was the last hour of a life, a steady dying out. It is a journey with no crescendos, only a steady pushing forwards – until the second part of the film where the mood takes on the quality of a scream extended outwards. One feels that life will continue on without interruption as long as the film continues. The anxiety comes from the realization that the film will come to a halt and one will be left exposed to an unpredictable world. The hypnotic rhythm of the film, the ever-altering changes in the formation of the letters that spell out "Reason over Passion" give the film a circular motion, a womb to rest in before oblivion. The Canadian propaganda aspect of the subject matter is something to hang on to, something sentimental and nostalgic while the other more disturbing level of the film carries us onwards to death . . . .

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The Grape Dealer's Daughter is Walter Gutman's cinematic search for the perfect girl to play opposite him in his self-appointed role as Bacchus. After discussing the possibilities of several girls (we are introduced to them one by one during the first part of the film), Walter finally chooses Anna as his heroine. The film rambles on rather lazily as Walter narrates his thoughts on the subject, throwing in occasional references to American history and other seemingly unrelated topics. The commentary is punctuated at regular intervals by the clinking of ice in a glass as Walter progresses from refreshment to refreshment. The narration has a self-mocking tone to it which is magnified at times by the clumsiness of the photography and the visual repetitions which seem to be there only to pad out the narration.

In spite of the amateurishness of the film, there is an honesty and humor overriding all. At the first sight of Anna nude – strolling through dense weeds – we share with Walter an awareness of her beautiful strong body. His erratic camera movements are really the way his eyes would see and we share his nervous excitement at the sight of the undressed female figure. The erotic nature of some of the images becomes heightened by the casualness of his narration. There is one marvellous scene where Walter, lying nude, now turned Bacchus, is festooned with piles of grapes; over his head, on his chest, in his navel. Anna, crouched naked over him, although catering to all of Walter's whims, is obviously on her own pleasure trip as well. Walter eats the grapes off Anna's body, now glistening under the juices of the squashed fruit. Champagne (or is it soda-pop?) is poured into Walter's navel in closeup, now looking like an erupting volcano, and spills over his enormous mound of a stomach. He is the epitome of the loveable dirty old man of jokes and stories and it's obvious he enjoys every minute of it.

No matter how ludicrous the content becomes, the dialogue keeps the film from falling apart, from becoming grotesque. At one point, with Anna astride 66-year-old Walter, depositing grapes on his stomach and crotch, he observes, "You have to be careful to remove the stems when piling grapes on a penis." Certainly an important lesson for us all.

THE GRAPE DEALER'S DAUGHTER

MONTREAL LETTER

Ronald Blumer

HARD CORE!

The Alternate Media Conference held at Goddard College in the woods of Vermont at the beginning of summer turned into a freaked-out happening which it would take a multi-screened multi-tracked movie of the order of *Woodstock* to fully convey. The advanced publicity labeled the conference as ". . . a gathering of a number of individuals from all over the U.S. and Canada actively committed to a vision of the media as an effective catalyst for awareness rather than to its present role as an anesthetic." 1200 of the gang showed up; the underground radio crowd, film and video producers and distributors, the record company representatives, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Baba Ram Dass and a liberal assortment of plain old freaks whose lives are their medium. The conference organizers, faced with the spectacular irony of trying to get something linear out of this bedlam, quickly gave up and yet, despite the four day acid orgies, the camp-ins, swim-ins and—yes people—fuck-ins, or perhaps because of them, the meeting proved to be a curious success.

From its very inception, the conference was a contradiction in terms. How do you organize an essentially anarchistic new nation into the politically effective force that it must be if it is to survive? How do you harness the power of pop music and the underground towards the ultimate destruction of the established order upon which it is presently built? The seemingly insoluble conflict between the freaks and the politicos translated itself into every workshop and seminar and provided the main dramatic force of the conference. What was required was a new way of organizing a new world, and both the medium and the message had to be thrashed out in the mud ponds of Plainfield Vermont.

There were numerous workshops at which the specialists could gather. A typical one was on underground comic books and related arts (such as graffitti). The workshop was held in a lounge of a library at Goddard. In the center ring were a group of twenty people ardently discussing the work of a particular artist and whether it had the correct revolutionary content. In the left ring was another group of people collectively freaking out on acid. One of the more rational members of this group would periodically go running around the room screaming at the top of his lungs, "Man, if you could harness the cosmic energy of one blade of grass growing between your toes . . ." In the right ring was a threesome from the hog farm who had taken off their clothes and were fucking very noisily. From among the

sighs of pleasure and writhing buttocks a head would arise priodically, flushed with the passion of the moment, and shout to the assembled multitude, "Hard core, THIS IS THE REVOLUTION!" Meanwhile, back at the center, a messianic neo-Da Vinci was describing how whole cities can become giant comic books and how he was busy going around New York etching his works into plate glass windows using hydrofluoric acid. And so it went.

One of the big discoveries of this unconvention was the unveiling of video tape as a new underground medium. An organization from New York calling themselves the Videofreex brought with them a large air-supported total-environment tent with slides and video projections on the ever-moving walls. The tent, which can hold about fifty people, is easily deflated, rolled up and transported around by station wagon. With video equipment becoming cheap and easy to use and with 1/2-inch equipment as portable as sound recording equipment, it is hardly surprising that television is fast becoming the grass roots medium of the future. The Videofreex already have a warehouse full of what they quaintly call "radical software" consisting of a cross indexed assortment of the tapes they have been shooting since they were organized: Both the problem and the joy with these tapes is that they cannot be used on standard television and so new distribution channels have to be created. The solution is the one-to-one method of distribution practiced in the Videofreex tent or the Global Village video theatre in New York. The necessity of having to bring the media to the people also serves the function of bringing the people to the media—often in an active participatory way. Video tape can provide some of the *alternative* being sought at the conference. At the present time, it is difficult to edit and get colour with half inch video tape but it is obvious that underground television is right around the corner, providing the life, dynamics and relevancy so painfully lacking in its celuloid-locked older brother.

Ronald Blumer

HOW? 4

by DAVID DORFMAN

LENSES

Focal length is a basic value of a lens and determines its angle of field and its magnification. These factors are all inter-related: as focal length increases, angle of field decreases and magnification increases. Focal length is usually given in millimeters (e.g., a 25mm lens), though sometimes inches are used (e.g., a 25mm lens is the same as a one inch lens).

PRIME LENSES

In most filming, particular situations will call for various angles of field and magnifications, which is why a single lens of one focal length is not sufficient. The classical solution to this problem is to use a set of lenses of different focal lengths.

A typical set of lenses would be telephoto (about 75mm), normal (about 25mm) and wide angle, which is usually one of two focal lengths, 15-17mm or about 10mm. The former type was until a few years ago the usual wide angle lens. The latter is a more recent design and offers wider coverage and in many ways better all around performance.

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ZOOM LENSES

A more recent solution to the problem of requiring different focal lengths is to use a zoom lens. The focal length of a zoom lens can be varied. They are usually rated by their zooming range. A lens with a 12-120 range can be made equivalent in angle of field and magnification to any prime lens of between 12 and 120mm. Sometimes the range is expressed as a ratio; a 12-120 zoom has a zoom ratio of 10:1. The ratio facilitates comparison with other zooms.

The two main advantages of fixed focal length lenses are lower cost and somewhat superior sharpness. While zooms have not yet made prime lenses obsolete, they do offer much greater flexibility, convenience and speed in setting up shots, characteristics especially desirable for independent filmmaking. They are almost a necessity for documentary work, especially with sync sound. The ability to "zoom" is a relatively minor, though not negligible asset.

The best modern zooms, such as the Angenieux series, offer more than acceptable sharpness. In any case, due to the influence of TV and color film (both relatively low definition mediums) audiences no longer expect and may not even want a totally sharp image. (See McLuhan on this subject.)

Even if one generally uses a zoom, there are situations which may call for the use of a prime lens.

1. Except for more expensive lenses, the wide angle range of zooms does not go down beyond 16-18mm. Therefore, when such zooms are used, a 10mm wide angle lens is definitely handy. Some zooms have a wide angle range which extends to about 12mm. This reduces, but does not eliminate the need for a supplementary wide angle lens.

2. Most zooms cannot focus closer than 5 or 6 feet. Close-up attachments are available for some zooms, but it is usually a better solution to use a prime lens.

(The recently introduced Angenieux 9.5-95 zoom more or less eliminates these two problems, though some filmmakers may find its extra weight and bulk objectionable. Its cost is a bit higher than the 12-120 zoom.)

3. Most modern zooms are about 1 1/2 stops slower than a standard normal lens — not usually a significant disadvantage for black and white negative (which tolerates underexposure and forced development) but the difference can be significant for color film and, occasionally, black and white reversal, which do not. The speed differences between zooms and wide angle or telephoto lenses are less, generally varying from 2/3 of a stop to nothing.

The Pan Cinor 17-85 compact zoom is in a class by itself. It is very small and light and can be mounted on a turret with two prime lenses — usually a wide angle lens, and a F/1.4 normal lens for low light levels (it is a comparatively slow F/3.8).

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MORE SPECIALIZED LENSES

Alternate and/or Additional Prime Lenses: Assuming that the filmmaker has as his usual set of prime lenses a 10mm, 25mm, 75mm; the addition of a milder wide angle lens (15-17mm) and a milder telephoto (50mm) will allow greater flexibility in camera placement. Where considerable filming is done in low light levels, a lens such as the Angenieux F/0.95 25mm lens may prove useful. It is about one stop faster than the usual normal lenses but unfortunately costs much more. Macro lenses are lenses which can focus on fairly close subjects. For example, the Switar 26mm lens focuses on subjects as close as 7 1/2", whereas a standard normal lens will only focus up to about 18".

Extreme Wide Angle Lenses: An example is the Angenieux R-7 5.9mm lens. Its angle of field is 94 degrees (compared to 52 degrees on 10mm lenses). These lenses are not distortion lenses, but when used at average camera-to-subject distance they produce an extreme exaggeration of depth as in the "love scene" in *Medium Cool*. Fish-Eye lenses are very extreme wide angle lenses, purposely not corrected for curvature of field and thus are true distortion lenses. They are available as adaptations of still camera lenses and also as versions designed for cinema such as the Super Tegea 1.9mm lens.

High Power Telephoto Lenses: To get close-ups of distant subjects. Somewhat arbitrarily I consider any lens above 75mm to be a high power telephoto. Like wide angle lenses, telephotos introduce a perspective distortion but it works just the opposite way, flattening rather than exaggerating depth, an effect many times used by Kurosawa.

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JUDGING LENS QUALITY

It is not practical for a filmmaker to run comparative lens tests for "quality", therefore the following information will be useful.

1. Price is a good index of over-all quality between lenses of comparable maximum F stop and focal length or zooming range.

2. If there is not enough money to buy three good prime lenses, buy two or even one, and the rest later, a better procedure than buying three inferior lenses. Usually, the order of usefulness is normal; wide-angle; telephoto; and they can be bought in that order.

3. The zoom lenses generally available in C-mounts are limited tb the products of two companies, with only a few exceptions. The Angenieux series are fully professional lenses, and should be used where maximum image quality is desired. The Pan Cinor series are good lenses which utilize a design which is simpler, lighter and cheaper to make, but they are not in the same class as the Angenieux series. They are usually sufficient for work to be projected only on small screens. These statements may not apply to the new Pan-Cinor 12-120 zoom, which I am not familiar with. The Schneider Variogon 16-80 zoom and the Switar O E "86" are comparable to the Angenieux lenses. Due to rapid advances in lens design, it is best to buy models of zooms still in production, especially in the case of the older Pan Cinor lenses which are not particularly good by modern standards.

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USED LENSES: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

1. Examine very carefully the condition of the entire mount. It should show no signs of having been dropped or otherwise damaged. The glass elements are set into the mount to a tolerance of a few 10,000ths of an inch and if they have been shifted, the lens will not work as designed. Sometimes the black finish of a lens may appear worn in places, a condition usually caused by normal use and not by itself a sign of damage.

2. Damage to the front element will ruin image sharpness. A single small scratch won't

matter but look for a network of tiny scratches or abrasions. Damage to the front element can also show up as a dull or whitish-gray or milky appearance to the glass.

(These are the two most important points. The following are less frequently encountered.)

3. The diaphragm leaves should not appear damaged. They should form a regular polygonal pattern which expands and contracts as the F stop ring is turned.

4. When looking through the lens there should not be any loose flecks of material. If star-shaped light patterns are observed, the cemented glass elements have begun to separate. Occasionally, a tiny bubble will be observed in the glass of even the best lenses. They are not harmful.

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PRICES AND GUARANTEES

The remarks in "HOW No. 3" about camera prices and guarantees also apply to lenses. I should add that there is the occasional practice of selling lenses that have been directly imported, without going through the American or Canadian distributor. While sometimes these lenses are real bargains, it should be borne in mind they have no guarantee, other than what the store is willing to give.

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LENS COLLIMATION

A lens, new or used, must be exactly positioned in the socket it is to be used in. This adjustment is called lens collimation. It should only be done by a reputable service. Sometimes, when a new camera is sold with lenses, collimation will already have been done, and there will be some sort of certificate to that effect.

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TESTING

The tests discussed in "HOW No. 3" also apply to lenses. However, used lenses should be checked for centering and flare at the time they are collimated. A zoom must be checked for centering throughout its entire range. If the tests run by the filmmaker and the inspection by the camera service fail to show any deficiencies, it is safe to assume the lens is operating as designed.

sundry NOTES for A MONDAY MORNING

Dennis Kawicki

A film that is not available for public viewing in the U.S. is *The Silent Majority*, a film produced by the United States Information Agency to convince the people of the world that the majority of Americans support President Nixon's policies in Vietnam. The film was made shortly after Nixon's Nov. 3rd televised speech in which he asked for national support of his 'plan' to end the war; the film was intended to counter the March on Washington scheduled for Nov. 15 (at which time over a quarter of a million people gathered in the capital to demonstrate against the war while Nixon spent the day watching football on TV). The film was translated into 14 languages and sent to 106 countries overseas for telecasting. First reports, however, reveal that only 26 stations showed it and those that did showed only segments. No one really seemed to care. *The Silent Majority* shows Nixon opening up letters and telegrams which supposedly support his policy of 'Vietnamization' of the war (the narration comments, "What I have found is the loudest sound is not the one we should be listening to."). Also included is an interview with Dr. Gallup who summarizes the results of his poll which followed the Nixon telecast in which over 80 per cent of those polled sided with the President (not mentioned was the Gallup poll of the previous month in which 57 per cent disagreed with him) . . . . The USIA 'Ministry of Truth' is also preparing a short film biography on the Vice-President and a 90 minute film on the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The latter film, begun under the Johnson administration, is being directed by John Ford . . . . The TV Scene: Some of the best social documentary work being done today can be seen on National Educational Television. NET has sponsored work by filmmakers such as Fred Wiseman, Arthur Barron, Jack Willis, and others. Films recently screened have included Wiseman's *Hospital* and Alan Levin's *Who Invited Us?* (historical survey of America's imperialistic foreign policy). Producer Jack Willis, who last season did *Appalachia: Rich Land, Poor People*, has now prepared a 3-part analysis of agriculture and the American economy. The first two parts focus on the plight of the farmer, caught in a price squeeze, and the consumer who has to face soaring costs. Both are the victims of big business, the subject of part 3.

. . . Commercial television seems to be picking up on the trend toward politicization. The fall line-up of new series will put emphasis on youth and 'reality', with shows on ghetto lawyers, young lawyers, storefront lawyers, young doctors, young criminologists and young psychiatrists; titles include *The Nuvos, Rap,* and *The Young Rebels.* Even *Bonanza* is jumping on the bandwagon. The show will be adding a new character to its cast of regulars: "an anti-Establishment type from the Civil War era".

REFLEC-TIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by HERMAN G. WEINBERG

SOME THOUGHTS ON VON STERNBERG IN MEMORIAM

Excerpted from Mr. Weinberg's forthcoming book, "Saint Cinema", which DBS Publications will issue in New York this Fall.

He was concerned with raveling and unraveling psychological skeins in which the characters were merely vehicles for his designs, to adumbrate his personal mythology.

He was a director like Manet and Degas were painters, holding himself aloof from his subject matter. Behind every image one sensed a glacial detachment.

He composed his films with a kind of insolent bravura, employing a technique that was all but invisible. Stupendous care went into the fashioning of every "curve" in the film, every moment on the screen. Everything that happened, everything that was said, clicked into place like the tumblers in a lock.

Morocco, Shanghai Express and *The Devil is a Woman* are the works of an astonishingly gifted lapidary. Toughness combined with elegance, the whole seasoned, but judiciously, even sparingly, with fruity dialogue, invariably of a sardonic impulse, cast in a kind of dream world that had just enough contact with reality to give substance to his delicate shadows. No one was a better example of the style of poetic realism, of neo-baroque.

In another sense, one might be tempted to describe his style as imbued with an immense *chic*, if one would not be misunderstood.

Everything counted in his film. There was not a gesture, a word, a shot, anything, that did not add to the whole, contributing its bit to propel the story forward, much like the action of a combustion engine. Anathema to him was that barren fustian or rhetoric that in music is called "passage work" and which, in films, he called "pictorial wasteland".

An idea was refracted by an attitude toward that idea so that it was bent to his purpose. *The Shanghai Gesture*, for example, is a lesson in diffractions, wherein everything that happens has been broken up into its various meanings (tones and overtones), much as rays of light are broken up by interference into all the colors of the spectrum. That "interference" in the making of a Sternberg film was the prism of the director's brain through which his story was filtered and which was refracted into the intellectual glints that made watching a Sternberg film a totally different (and richer) experience than watching most other directors' work.

He was, in a sense, "an old China hand", as the expression has it, but his *chinoiserie* and *japonaiserie* were based less on actual Chinese and Japanese designs than on the Western vision of Cathay. Sternberg had never been to China before he made *Shanghai Express* or *The Shanghai Gesture*, though *Anatahan* was made in Japan. (For that matter, Sternberg was never in North Africa, either, before he made *Morocco*.) All were works of the imagination, of the fantasy of the director, of an idea, a real idea, refracted through the prisms of the director's attitude, his personal vision. A Sternberg film was a very personal thing. (Melville didn't visit Nantucket, either, until after "Moby Dick" was published.)

Remains the matter of Marlene Dietrich . . .

Among those Viennese who attempted to come to terms with Eros were Freud, Schnitzler, and Hofmannsthal — and the Americanized Viennese, Sternberg.

So much has been said on this subject that I will sum it up here by suggesting that she became a prop for his bedezinment fetishes, an object for his sublimative search, a tool for his psychological exorcisms.

In conclusion:

If I were to search for an epigraph to place before an essay which attempted to describe the style of Sternberg as a filmmaker, I don't think I would hesitate to use this from Kafka:

Leopards break into the temples and drink the sacrificial chalices dry. This occurs repeatedly, again and again; finally, it can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes a part of the ceremony.

Kahlil Gibran once wrote that work is "love made visible . . . if you bake bread with indifference," he noted, "you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half a man's hunger. And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distills a poison in the wine."

Sternberg's works were labors of love. "In a *milieu* with its easy contempt for aesthetic values," I wrote in my book on him, "the hieratic disdain of his style – which ranks with the most patrician filmmaking in the world – is a thrilling thing to see, as it always is wherever work is touched, beyond the call of duty, with the vital grace of art."

THE MIND'S EYE

by JOHN HOFSESS

It is not uncommon to find that the detractors of films such as *The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg, 2001: A Space Odyssey,* and *Fellini Satyricon* are more articulate than the bulk of their supporters; for with any film of pronounced visual beauty one is likely to attract those whose appreciation of art is too occult for syntax, and whose concept of "criticism" is a guttural "groovy", a "right-on" shake of the fist, or else a "no-way" shrug of the shoulders. *Fellini Satyricon* needs to be rescued not only from its detractors but its unintelligible admirers, if only to distinguish why a film *can* succeed purely on visual terms when subject and style are appropriate, as opposed to the dilettantish *Zabriskie Point* (which like most "headfilms" is mindless but pretends to be a veritable "Death Of A Nation" in the bargain). There is a certain element of the current film-going public which is willing to herald every scene of postcard prettiness in *Elvira Madigan*, and every gilded lily in *Blow-Up* and *Zabriskie Point* as a "visually stunning experience", yet they are films with merely a modicum of imagination, and a sense of beauty as precious and vapid as that displayed in the handiwork of interior decorators.

For some, such films are viewed as part of a new visual sensibility, a phenomenon which we are told imperils (or somehow triumphs over) literacy; leaving those who were less "stunned" to wonder why it should be *Zabriskie Point*, and not *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Children of Paradise,* or *Citizen Kane* that asserted this quarrelsome claim of cinematic supremacy. In one sense, the answer has nothing to do with art, the energies of visual art or the alleged fatigue of literature; but with the demographics of population growth in this century of western civilization, the cultural maturation period of each new individual has increased. Taught in some ways, the culture of the past in art and science is a weighty burden, not a legacy; and it is our misfortune that at a time when fewer individuals are actually needed in a technological society – fewer in number but substantially better educated – we are doing the opposite, providing many more with considerably less, and so diluting and transforming the educative process that it serves only to provoke an anti-intellectual life-style by way of reaction among the young.

The supremacy of one mode of art over another cannot be measured by the number of people who paid to see *Easy Rider* last year in contrast to those who paid to read Nabokov's "Ada or Ardor"; for while *au courant* critics doubtless did both, lower levels of cultural intelligence did neither. The presumed dichotomy between cinematic and literary art vanishes at a certain level of intellectual skill and interest, and only for people of borderline literacy is McLuhan's "either/or" postulation valid; but for such people seeing a film like *Easy Rider* or reading a novel such as "Ada or Ardor" isn't a choice, or what William James termed a "live option", because they do not have skills of equal facility to do either. Reading is itself an act of understanding but "seeing" is not. The ability to read literary works includes, at least in part, the ability to understand them, but anyone can "see" a film, it requires no skill at all. Unlike literature, which tends to stratify its audience at the outset, in that people who can't understand the complexity of "Ulysses", the density of a Rimbaud poem, or the verbal prestidigitation of Anthony Burgess' "A Clockwork Orange", would never expose themselves to such works in the first place; films can be viewed passively, without any substantial degree of comprehension and insight. This is, I suspect, one of the reasons why films are subject to such erratic and inadequate responses by the *illiterati*, for when one lacks reading skills, one lacks the cognitive aspect of visual perception.

Whereas *Zabriskie Point* is aesthetically fussy and intellectually fuzzy, the standard marks of a minor artist, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Fellini Satyricon* are works of Olympian imagination, and like the works of Luis Buñuel, would remain impressive as original film visions even if they were to contain technical deficiencies and other imperfections. The most salient aspect of *Fellini Satyricon* is its generosity of spirit, its robust forbearance of humanity in all its variegated frailties, and as such it is the illustration of a moral philosophy which cannot be counterfeited, or even easily imitated. Fellini's temperament is not Petronian, which doesn't mean as some critics have asserted that he "lacks" certain valuable qualities; Fellini, creating at this point in history, has to have a more finely tuned and subtle sense of irony than did Petronius, and he brings to his source material the expansive imagination of a major artist that made Orson Welles' *The Trial* a distinguished transformation of Kafka rather than a superfluous duplication. Fellini's personal development through *La Strada, La Dolce Vita, 8 1/2, Juliet of the Spirits* is the development of an artist who is replacing his sentimentality with a tougher and less capricious compassion. In *Fellini Satyricon* he strengthens his resolve to "see life steadily and see it whole", and transports a carnival of bawds and grotesques to the level of *la comédie humaine*. It is however an illustration of philosophy, rather than a preachment of maxims and meanings and the subject is not "decadence" but the record of Fellini's attitude toward decadence. In *La Dolce Vita* Fellini took the easy way with a sleazy subject, and demonstrated that he was more gifted in creating portraits of dissipation than he was in his sunday-school moralizing. While fascinated by decadence and the drama of dissolution, his psychological attitudes were less sophisticated than his artistic expertise. In *Fellini Satyricon* the last vestiges of ambivalence have been expunged, and he diligently applies his art to rendering the phenomena of decadence in objective term The film's sense of vision is not purely ocular, every frame is informed with philosophical and psychological values, and critics who regard the film as a picaresque hodgepodge of pretty pictures and nothing more, are giving the film an insensitive reading. For Fellini, the problems of mankind have always had their locus in man himself; he does not believe in black-and-white characterization, everyone is some shade of Dorian Gray; nor does he believe that society is corrupt and a baleful influence upon innate human goodness as Antonioni postulates in *Zabriskie Point*: Fellini takes the measure of man without illusions about his shortcomings and yet accepts the flawed human character with as much grace as is possible. By exploring the lower depths of human behaviour he tries to account for, understand and accept the probable future of mankind, and though that future may strike him as tragically stupid, and a repetition of the past, he serves notice in *Fellini Satyricon* that he will record it with the dispassionate irony of a modern Petronius. "Come hangman, come vulture", Fellini will practice his dauntless art.

The philosophy of *Fellini Satyricon* is not embodied in its characters, nor espoused by them, but is implicit in the film's conception: it is a vision of sceptical humanism, an Olympian gesture, a film that embraces humanity while withholding its endorsement. It is one of the least derivative films ever made, emerging purely from the wellsprings of imagination; but it is not magic for the sake of magic, magic without hope, an incantation in a void. Following Trimalchio's banquet, Encolpius and the aging poet Eumolpus wander outside and fall down in a stupor; while almost any other director would play the scene reproachfully, with at least the sly reproach of comedy, Fellini gives Eumolpus a speech of funereal eloquence, which says in part, "I leave you life itself. I leave you the seasons, especially spring and summer. I leave you the wind and the sun. I leave you the color of ripe grain, and the torrents and streams, the great clouds which fly solemnly and light . . . you'll look at them and perhaps you'll remember our brief friendship. And I leave you the trees and their busy inhabitants. Love, tears, happiness. The stars, Encolpius, I leave you those too. I leave you sounds, songs, noises; the voice of man which is the most harmonious of music . . . I leave you . . ." Whereupon they fall asleep. *Fellini Satyricon* is a film in which, between poetic emotion and erotic pleasure there is only a difference of degree. It has taken Fellini years to attain this exalted condition of mind in which every aspect of life exists in a state of grace, and now – in imperishable form – it is ours forever.

BOOKS

Ian and Elisabeth Cameron; *The Heavies*. 144 pp. Ian and Elisabeth Cameron; *Dames*. 144 pp. Peter Bogdanovich; *Fritz Lang in America*. 144 pp. Ian Cameron and Robin Wood; *Antonioni*. 144 pp. Robin Wood; *Ingmar Bergman*. 192 pp.

All Praeger Film Library: $4.95 cloth, $2.50 paper (in Canada: $3.00); except Bergman vol.: $5.95 cloth, $2.95 paper (in Canada: $3.50).

Finally Ian Cameron's excellent *Movie Paperbacks* series is generally available on this continent. True, the University of California deigned to issue five of the titles, but inexplicably missed several, including the Godard compilation (which remains unissued here). So, much praise to Praeger for their foresight in taking over these titles and may their Film Library flourish as it well deserves.

Well designed and really lavishly illustrated, the five volumes include the Camerons' fun compilations of biographical facts and filmographies for their very personal choice of *The Heavies* and *Dames* (why was this volume rather prissily retitled – the original English title *Broads* was far more apt) from American films of the last three decades. One Ann Savage credit is missed (Ann Savage?): *Renegade Girl*, a 1946 horror.

The Lang volume goes far in redressing the critical balance of attention for that director's American films, often slighted in the past. In the form of an extended interview it includes many fascinating insights into Lang's methods and a very detailed filmography covering all his films.

Cameron's work on Antonioni first appeared here in a 1962 issue of *Film Quarterly* and still remains an important pioneer explication of that oft-misunderstood master. Well, much more than pioneer really, since for many of us it did much to mould and form our opinions and reactions to the films. It's good to have it back in this more accessible form. Wood's contribution is a fine examination of the colour films for which Cameron feels little sympathy. Here, as in his Bergman volume, Wood is finally dealing with material which can bear the full weight of his critical method. His earlier volumes on Hawks and Hitchcock were often quite simply a pretentious and silly critical straight-jacketing of their subjects. But his traversal of the Bergman terrain is on the contrary quite simply the best book yet on the director.

As in all of this series the filmography and the bibliography are especially valuable, though oddly the English translation of the *Trilogy* is overlooked.

The B.F.I. Cinema One series has already switched U.S. publishers once (the switch in English publishers has more to do with the transfer of the main editor, I gather) so support Praeger by buying!

Glen Hunter

Peter Cowie; *Seventy Years of Cinema*. A. S. Barnes-Thomas Yoseloff, 287 pp., $20.00. Alfred E. Twomey and Arthur F. McClure; *The Versatiles: a study of supporting character actors and actresses in the American motion picture, 1930-1955*. Barnes-Yoseloff, 304 pp., $13.50. Joe Morella and Edward Epstein; *Judy: the films and career of Judy Garland*. Citadel, $9.95. Ken Wlaschin; *Bluff Your Way in the Cinema*. Wolfe, $1.00.

Peter Cowie's coverage of slightly over seventy years of cinema history by highlighting the important films of each year from 1895 to 1967 is admirable in its intent. For each year we find good credits including running times and excellent notes on several major films plus a checklist of other important features, shorts, documentaries and general facts (some of minimal importance). There is a certain evident strain in filling in those first sixteen years (so much blank space!) and some dubious factual statements; still the main bulk of the book is useful, the choice of films generally orthodox (though some transatlantic title variations are ignored) and its value to film societies, students, et al immense. Unfortunately its pictorial content, while valuable, is undistinguished (how could any reviewer compare it in scope to Blum's *Pictorial Histories?*) and there seems little justification for issuing it at such an exhorbitant price. A good quality paperback format would have been much wiser and helped a generally valuable work reach its proper market.

Two history professors are responsible for *The Versatiles* and they both get a failing grade. This is a shambles. The work is in two sections – biographical and non-biographical – and they have to be kidding about some of the actors assigned to the second category. You see they sent out a lot of questionaires, and a lot weren't answered – so . . . Disgraceful, especially when most of the material in the biographical section is so uselessly chatty, loaded with errors and does little to tell us what made each actor so distinctive, let alone give us a relatively complete checklist of films (admittedly a very difficult task). At least the illustrations are well chosen – but any book on character actresses that omits Norma Varden, Almira Sessions and Jody Gilbert is just not taking its task seriously anyway.

Citadel really lowers the standard of its film series with the publication of *Judy*, a really shoddy muddle overloaded with wretchedly reproduced newspaper headlines and ads, badly researched film credits and much fan mag piffle. The lead off illustration for the *Wizard of Oz* section is the utterly grotesque original conception of Dorothy, but not identified as such and instead of giving all the songs from each of her films we get a woefully incomplete listing of highlights. In any case *Film Careers*, now defunct, did a superb issue on Judy Garland back in 1963, at 50 cents, which puts this to shame.

The Cinema addition to the Bluffer's Guides is a surprisingly useful, slightly tongue-in-cheek compendium, but would someone find Wlaschin a synonym for "cult", which must appear at least five times a page.

Glen Hunter

clive denton ON FILM

Since this is a column, I'd like to put on top of it Robert Downey (A Prince), who continues to make very funny and iconoclastic movies, in the best of good humour and the worst of bad taste. The slings and arrows of *Putney Swope* find some hits and some misses, as they did in *Chafed Elbows* and *No More Excuses*. But – in daring to castigate the blacks as well as us whites – Mr. Downey hits often enough to get my endorsement; he seems that rare bird, a big mouth who is also pure in heart.

After last autumn's New York Film Festival, I meant to nod my admiring head to the remarkable salvage work of the American Film Institute, which was shown off with true showmanship by a retrospective of rare and mostly wonderful old Hollywood pictures. This retrospective is topical again, because we plan to show at least a selection of the 25 features in Toronto (at the Ontario Film Theatre, where else?). The directors range from Hawks to Stroheim; the irreplaceable stars from Lillian Gish (in *The Scarlet Letter*) to Boris Karloff (in *The Old Dark House*). Apart from the films' own merits, it is a cinephile's treat to see all the old versions of familiar trade marks. Leo the Lion mute for silent pictures, that old Universal airplane encircling the globe, Columbia's lady with a shield . . . Is it childish to care for such things? Then, long live childhood!

My thoughts on Victor Hugo Halperin, ace director of *White Zombie* coincided with a Toronto screening of his nutty and glorious *Supernatural* and produced some pleasing reaction from other film buffs who had thought themselves alone in liking V.H.H. Both Peter Poles and Leslie Otis made up filmographies for me. Here, Les is pictured with the Three Stooges; I'm sure many Torontonians who remember the friendly young Mr. Otis will be glad that he's finding lots of film work since graduating from UCLA. He wrote to me: "It is a beautiful feeling to be doing finally what you've always wanted to do". Amen to that.

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